the weekly
Standard

JULY 29, 1996 $2.95

WHY HE STILL HAUNTS US

By Christopher Caldwell

Re-Politicizing America
HARVEY MANSFIELD

News Flash: Dole Has a Strategy!
FRED BARNES

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The Clinton Deficit Reduction Plan
Another Arkansas financing scheme?

Your president might as well be financing the national debt with credit cards — that *is* the bottom line to his deficit reduction. He cut our long-term financing in half and shifted the debt to 70 percent fixed, five years or less, with 33 percent financed *one* year or less. Like a consumer in trouble, Clinton is now scrambling to cut interest costs after financing debt credit card-style.

Since 1993, short-term rates have nearly doubled, driving interest payments up 11 percent annually. Face reality — we are quickly becoming a banana republic. *We* cannot even meet the economic criteria imposed on *Russia* by the International Monetary Fund!

Solving the debt crisis should not be a partisan debate.

Even under Reagan, the budget was actually balanced between spending and revenue. The national debt doubled during those eight years *due to nothing other than interest expenditures*. If you put your money in the bank at eight percent compounded, you double it in less than 10 years. Despite Bush/Clinton tax hikes, the debt has doubled again. It's time we face the truth and stop trying to rewrite history for political purposes. The problem is serious, and it is more than just Medicare. Since 1950, the cumulative interest cost equals *68 percent of the total national debt*.

"It's the taxes, stupid."

Since Reagan's administration, revenue and spending have been balanced. Today, we collect nearly $100 billion more in taxes than we actually spend. The deficit has continued due *entirely* to interest expenditures. This is why deflation has emerged and economic growth has declined more than 50 percent.

Encouraged by our tax code, at times 1/3 of our debt has been held offshore — foreign holders of our debt pay no income tax! Moved offshore, these interest expenditures no longer stimulate the domestic economy. Exported capital creates few *American* jobs.

Restore the Constitution.

Foreign holders of our debt pay no taxes. Illegal aliens pay no taxes. This tax code discriminates *only* against American citizens. When we abolish this mess and replace it with a national retail sales tax, we restore the Constitution. A 10-percent sales tax in combination with a 15-percent corporate tax not only is revenue neutral, it ends discrimination against the American worker. It attracts capital onshore. It promotes economic growth. And it lowers interest rates — making our debt more affordable.

For more information on the Princeton Proposal for tax reform & economic growth, contact:

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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 44 • JULY 29, 1996

the weekly Standard

2 SCRAPBOOK

4 CASUAL
Matthew Rees ponders B-school and big bucks.

6 CORRESPONDENCE

9 EDITORIAL
Spend More on Defense

10 DOLE HAS A STRATEGY!
It may not be much, but the man has a plan. *by* **Fred Barnes**

11 NORTON'S UTILITIES
The GOP pushes a one-town tax cut. *by* **Andrew Ferguson**

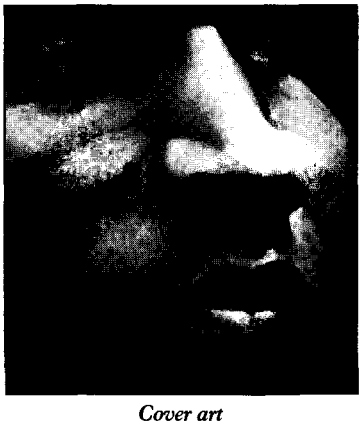
13 ATLANTA'S FIVE-RING CIRCUS
A politics-free Olympics? Dream on. *by* **Tucker Carlson**

15 SWING, VOTERS, SWING
Michiganders judge the campaign so far. *by* **Michael Barone**

16 THE MEDIA'S TRUE COLORS
"Anonymous" is outed; the anguish begins. *by* **Tod Lindberg**

18 ROCK THE LEFTIST VOTE
"Non-partisan" Democrats woo the young. *by* **Ari Redbord**

40 PARODY
The anonymous Lady who penned *Mansfield Park* is exposed.



Cover art
by Sean Delonas

21 WHY THE SIMPSON CASE ENDURES
Nine months after the verdict, the country still cares. *by* **Christopher Caldwell**

24 RE-POLITICIZING AMERICAN POLITICS
Conservatism: against Big Government, for self-government. *by* **Harvey Mansfield**

27 CORNY AS KANSAS IN AUGUST?
A Republican Senate primary may serve as a portent. *by* **Matthew Rees**

MOVIES

30 THE LAST WAR MOVIE *Independence Day* fills a void. *by* **John Podhoretz**

BOOKS

32 DISCORDANT SQUEEZEBOX E. Annie Proulx writes idea-novels—too bad. *by* **J. Bottum**

34 FARRAKHAN'S APOLOGIST A bigot finds a friendly biographer. *by* **Midge Decter**

36 SUBJECTED TO DICTATORSHIP Zheng Yi is a witness for China. *by* **David Aikman**

38 SERIOUS NONSENSE Shouldn't a critique be a little critical? *by* **James Nuechterlein**

William Kristol, *Editor and Publisher* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor* **John Podhoretz,** *Deputy Editor*

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A Ridge Too Far?

Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge's prospects for the GOP vice-presidential slot may have peaked this past week. The week before, Dole had been impressed by Ridge. "He's an awfully good man," Dole told an associate after they spent time together at the All-Star Game in Philadelphia. Dole's staff also liked Ridge: a youthful Vietnam vet, Catholic, from a pivotal state, and pro-choice but against federal funding of abortions and in favor of the ban on partial-birth abortions.

But by the middle of last week the Dole campaign had learned that Ridge's congressional record was not just moderately conservative, it was pretty liberal. Ridge's American Conservative Union vote rating for his twelve years in the House was 51 out of a possible 100—about 30 points below the average House Republican. He opposed President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, the B-2 bomber, and the MX missile and was one of only 16 House Republicans to vote in March 1986 against aid to the Nicaraguan contras.

The VP, Dole's advisers now believe—and they *think* Dole believes—has to be conservative. So look for a Bill Bennett boomlet over the next ten days or so, since he did very well in his two days on the Dole plane last week, impressing not just Dole's staff but Dole himself.

Bennett, incidentally, is pushing hard for Dole to move quickly on a "Hollywood II" speech. He's also arguing the campaign should focus on the drug issue. Bennett makes the case that drug use has gone up under Clinton and that this is probably not unrelated to the Clinton White House's cavalier attitude towards drugs—a model for how Dole can relate the "character" issue to an important public-policy matter.

Meanwhile, the Dole campaign plans to hire Billy Dale (the indicted and exonerated former Travel Office director) to coordinate arrangements for the press charter. Not a bad way to remind reporters every day of Travelgate and associated scandals and of Clinton's problematic character.

Welfare Deform

Bob Dole, Haley Barbour, Newt Gingrich, Trent Lott, and Gov. Mike Leavitt of Utah (former head of the Republican Governors Association) were against it. But House Republicans went ahead and won passage of a welfare reform bill, and the Senate is expected to follow suit. Dole fears President Clinton will sign the bill, taking the issue off the table in the presidential race this fall. Not so, insists Rep. Jimmy Hayes of Louisiana, a Democrat-turned-Republican. If Clinton signs, it will split the Democratic party and lead to a sour convention in Chicago. If Clinton vetoes it, Dole has an even better issue. Hayes and Ways and Means chairman Bill Archer lobbied hard to go forward with the bill, persuading House GOP honchos Dick Armey, Tom DeLay, and John Boehner. Gingrich and the others were forced to cave.

Keynote Snoozers

So Susan Molinari will be the keynote speaker at this year's Republican convention, joining an august list of stem-winding luminaries including Harold Stassen, Mark Hatfield, Dan Evans (who?), Richard Lugar, Guy Vander Jagt, Katherine Davalos Ortega (who again?), and Tom Kean. In fact, in the last four-plus decades, we could come up with only one truly memorable keynote address—Douglas MacArthur's in 1952, in which he gave the man who fired him whatfor in a big way. And the others?

In 1980, Vander Jagt, hoping to impress Gov. Reagan enough to be named the vice-presidential nominee, delivered his 35-minute address from memory—"When you get down on your knees and ask a girl to marry you," he said, "you don't use a TelePrompTer."

Why was U.S. treasurer Kay Ortega picked for the job in 1984? In the immortal words of a Republican official, still unidentified: "She wasn't chosen because she's a woman; she was chosen because she's a Hispanic." Ortega began her speech by saying, "I am honored because I know there are many members of our party more eloquent than I." And she actually said—no foolin'—"*Mi casa es su casa.*"

Kean, like Molinari a moderate Eastern-seaboard Republican, gave a robust speech in 1988, declaring, "The Democrats may try to talk like Dirty Harry, but

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they will still act like Pee Wee Herman."

And most recently, Phil Gramm did not do himself much good in 1992 with a keynote address in which he described himself as a man "tryin' to do the Lord's work in the devil's city."

Yes, it appears Molinari has some mighty small shoes to fill.

Dollars for Felons?

The House GOP task force on reforming Congress came up with seven proposals as part of the once-ballyhooed "Reform Week." But one of the proposals that probably *won't* be debated is a bill to deny pensions to members of Congress or staffers convicted of felonies while in office. Perhaps it is mere coincidence, but 17-term congressman Joe McDade of Pennsylvania, under a five-count indictment for job-related racketeering and bribery and currently on trial, has been cornering his colleagues in an effort to get them to reconsider what had been previously nicknamed the "Rostenkowski bill." You remember Rosty: He's the Democrat who ended up with a $96,462-a-year pension that he's now collecting in jail. Another instance of your tax dollars at work.

Pet Legislation

Bipartisanship is not dead! Congressmen Tom Lantos (a D from CA) and Jon D. Fox (an R from PA) have joined hands across the aisle to battle the scourge of . . . pet theft? Yes: Congress has finally decided to take this bull by the horns and consider the Family Pet Protection Act.

The bill, says Fox in a press release, is "an attempt to stop the illegal act of pet theft" through educational efforts and (of course) regulation. Apparently we've got an epidemic of Rover-robbing and Fluffy-filching going on in this great country, and Democrats and Republicans alike mean to end the conspiracy of silence and lift the veil of shame. The bill itself may be unstoppable. As Fox points out, it is both "anti-crime" and "pro-pet." You might even say it kills two birds with one stone. Then again you might not.

We note that the Doris Day Animal League is supporting the legislation, which means that the celebrity train is about to leave the station. This in turn means that we may soon have a full-blown national crusade on our hands. Expect to see pictures of missing, slobbering pooches on the side of Dog Chow bags, poignant portraits of vanished Burmese peeking out from the package of kitty litter. IT'S TEN O'CLOCK: DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR SCHNAUZER IS? Press conferences, telethons, benefit concerts, front-page tear-jerkers in the *Washington Post*. And, of course, congressional hearings. Maybe Sting or Meryl Streep will testify, along with Eddie from *Frasier*!

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Casual

How the Other Half Lives

I did something recently I probably won't do again: I spent a weekend at Harvard Business School. My main reason for going was to see a set of friends while they're all in one place. But a small part of me wanted to go because my economic ignorance has occasionally prompted me to think I should go to business school.

During my time in Cambridge, I did find myself briefly seduced by the prospect of an MBA and a job in "banking" or "consulting" that presumably would boost my salary many times over. This sentiment grew stronger when I met people possessed of the airy self-confidence that comes from being enrolled in the world's premier business school and knowing that soon you'll be capable of making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. Happily, no one was impolitic enough to raise the money issue, though two of my college friends all but accused me of having ulterior motives for calling them after having been out of touch for a few years. I chose not to take offense, realizing there may come a time when I actually do need something from these budding investment bankers—like one of those hot stock tips that never make their way to Washington.

I wasn't in Cambridge long enough to know whether I would like business school, but there's one book I'd recommend to anyone who thinks about applying: Harvard calls it "The Prospectus," but it's better known as "The Facebook." I was handed a copy soon after arriving, and careful scrutiny of its contents proved enlightening. For not only does the book include the name and photo of everyone in the class—handy for the vast majority of students who are unmarried—it also contains a set of appendices that greatly facilitate the primary mission of so many HBS students: networking. Say you meet a classmate at a party, and you can't remember her name, but you conveniently remember that she once worked at McKinsey. You look up "McKinsey" in the appropriate appendix, where there will be a list of all your classmates who have worked there, and then—presto!—you cross-reference this list with the photos. If they had had such a book at Georgetown and Yale, just think how Bill Clinton's student electioneering would have been simplified.

The Facebook contains appendices for country or state of origin, languages spoken, undergraduate university, and course of study as well as places of employment. I fly-specked the backgrounds of the 650 first-year students in hopes of finding someone with a background similar to mine. I was lucky to turn up even one. My first job after college was in Washington, D.C., making $17,500 at the *New Republic*. The HBSers, by contrast, all seemed to come from New York or London, where they made three or four times that much working for outfits so deep in the business of making money—Lazard Frères, J.P. Morgan, Brown Brothers Harriman—they don't bother setting up shop in a non-money town like Washington.

This seemed to confirm my suspicion that I wasn't really suited for business school (at least not at Harvard). My paranoid side wondered about the ideological environment, as I've had too many friends tell horror stories about their encounters with tenured radicals. Harvard has never been known as a bastion of conservatism—right-wingers tend to deride it as "the Kremlin on the Charles"—and I guessed the business school would be populated by temporarily radicalized students trying to compensate for studying a subject as heartless as how to maximize profits.

Indeed, the business school is far from immune to political correctness. The spouses of married students are officially "partners," and there are the inevitable identity-based groups for gays, blacks, and Asians. But the existence of a Venture Capital Club was a clue that this environment was markedly different from the one I experienced as an undergraduate at Wesleyan. Indeed, I was pleasantly surprised to learn that there is a grudging acceptance within the business school that—to put it simply—the market works, and it works better than the clumsy hand of government.

I asked a few students to explain why they thought capitalism was the preferred way of doing business, but only one came up with a satisfactory answer. He explained that after graduating from college, he had spent three years at Morgan Stanley and one year doing community service in Costa Rica. After two years at HBS, he'd concluded he could do much more long-term good for poor Latin Americans by privatizing their telephone system in an investment-banking deal than he could digging latrines in their barrios. That's the kind of story that warms the heart of an ideologue such as myself. But it still doesn't make me want to go to business school.

Matthew Rees

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"We killed it!" — *George Stephanopoulos*

The book the Clinton White House doesn't want you to read

Never before has a presidential Administration gone to such extremes to suppress a book — and to silence its author.

According to Fred Barnes in *The Weekly Standard* (July 22), when *Unlimited Access* hit bookstores three weeks ago, the Administration dispatched no fewer than seven top aides to pressure ABC News to cancel an interview with the book's author, former FBI agent Gary Aldrich.

One of those involved in the pressure campaign, reveals Barnes, was chief White House press spokesman Mike McCurry, who "made clear there would be consequences if ABC didn't go along." Fred Barnes comments:

> Though you'd hardly know it from the press coverage, this was an unprecedented effort by the White House — any White House — to exert pressure on a news organization to keep a critic of the president off television. Not since the Nixon Administration tried unsuccessfully to block publication of the Pentagon Papers twenty-five years ago has a White House leaned so aggressively on the media to alter a news decision. And the remarkable thing is the heavy-handed pressure may have paid off.

It did indeed. As *The Washington Post* reported on July 1, the "campaign" to silence Agent Aldrich "seemed to be bearing fruit yesterday. Both CNN's 'Larry King Live' and NBC's 'Dateline' canceled plans to interview Aldrich . . . ." And afterwards, writes Barnes,

> Aldrich became *persona non grata* in the mainstream media. What happened to the Aldrich menace? "We killed it," boasts Stephanopoulos.

Yet despite the White House's attempt to ban the very mention of this book from the airwaves, the American public has made *Unlimited Access* a runaway nationwide bestseller.

Media skeptics convinced . . .

Americans are forced to ask, what is it about *Unlimited Access* that so frightens the Clintons? Why the massive effort to bury this book?

The answer is as straightforward as the author himself: his exposé of the Clintons' deliberate subversion of the White House security system — which even Aldrich's most vociferous critics admit cannot be denied.

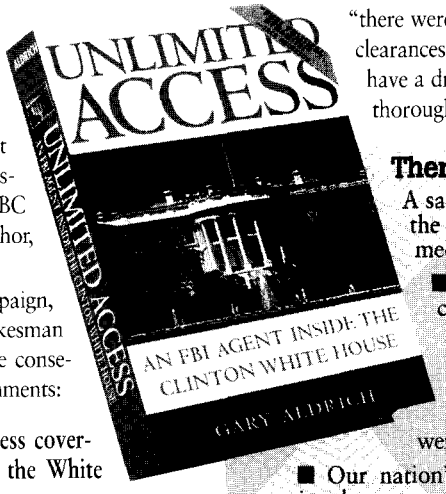
"There is a gut part of that book which clearly is correct, and that is that for months and months people that were hired to go to the White House declined to go to FBI interviews in order to get permanent passes."

— SAM DONALDSON
"This Week with David Brinkley" (6/30/96)

"There's something really, really serious about this. I mean Jack Ruby, for godsakes, could walk into the White House, get a job, and shoot the president under these circumstances. Half of these people weren't cleared."

— MORTON KONDRACKE
"The McLaughlin Group" (6/29/96)

Even staunch Clinton apologist Eleanor Clift of *Newsweek* conceded Aldrich's central charge by admitting on "Larry King Live" (July 1) that "there were hundreds of aides who didn't get their security clearances. This was a new generation, some of them did have a drug history, and they were lax about getting that thoroughly reported."



There's more to this story – much more

A sampling of Agent Aldrich's *other* charges that the White House has declined to answer, or the media to report:

- Recent drug use by White House aides: not confined to minor drugs like marijuana. And not just by *junior* staffers
- How Clinton lawyers made thorough background checks all but impossible, and ensured that even the most damning findings were ignored
- Our nation's top secrets: handled by staffers without security clearances
- What Craig Livingstone told Aldrich about Vince Foster's motive for suicide (Livingstone has not denied Aldrich's account)
- Theft by personnel a "major problem" in the White House
- New White House phone system so that Bill Clinton and his aides could make private calls without going through the switchboard. Cost to taxpayers: $27 million
- Unreported mêlée at a White House Fourth of July party
- How the Clintons "fixed" employee hours to deny low-level staffers health insurance — even as Hillary ran her nationalized health-care task force

Whom do you trust?

Those who implicitly trust Bill and Hillary Clinton and their aides may wish to take their word that *Unlimited Access* should be suppressed and that Gary Aldrich be silenced.

But those who prefer to trust an FBI agent selected during the Bush years to run one of our nation's most sensitive security operations — at a time when a spotless record like his was *still* a condition of employment in the White House — should judge *Unlimited Access* for themselves.

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Hillary Agonistes

Your Clinton-bashing gala was truly inspired, and I think the prize goes to Noemie Emery. Her "You're No Eleanor Roosevelt" (July 8 & 15) was an excellent summation of the Hillary Clinton we all know and love. Emery has her dead-on. If this one article could be widely disseminated, it would show any voter wondering whether to vote for Bill Clinton what a second term would mean. Mrs. Clinton would be unleashed and all of her character flaws would be thrust upon a nation with little recourse. The power behind the throne may be in hiding for the moment. But after a Clinton victory, Madame Hillary would come out swinging. If Bill wins reelection, we will be saved only if, as with Nixon, he gets nailed by one of the myriad scandals now in the hopper or waiting to surface.

Douglas L. Prisco
Roslyn Estates, NY

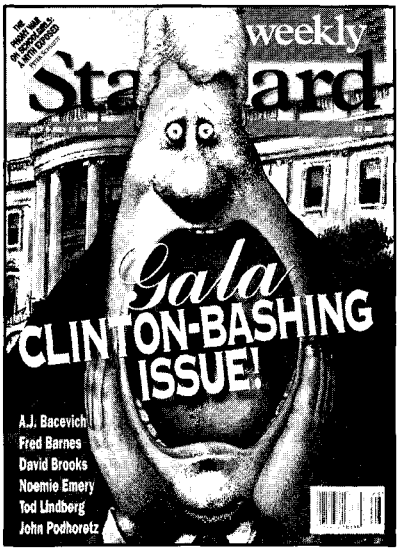
Thank you for the brilliant contribution of Noemie Emery. I am a conservative Republican but a member of the generation that knew Eleanor Roosevelt from newspapers, magazines, television, and classroom discussions led by teachers who promoted excellence, not mediocrity. I concur: Hillary Clinton is no Eleanor Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt was not ordinary, but extraordinary. I disagreed with her often about methodology and direction, but I never doubted her sincere regard and love for the American people—all of us.

Scott Rutherford
Camano Island, WA

The theme of John Podhoretz's "Ethics and the Clintonites" (July 8 & 15) is, I believe, that contemporary liberalism has become a cult of self-worship coupled with a statist agenda. Put these two together and you have a bizarre, malevolent theology. What Podhoretz describes is really a kind of twisted secular Calvinism whose adherents see themselves as an elect, predestined to rule over, plunder, and push around other people as they see fit.

It has been noted elsewhere that what sails under the flag of today's secular liberalism is in fact something that sees itself as more like an organized religion. Just as the 17th century had the divine right of kings, the 20th features the divine right of secular liberals. As screwy as it may appear to include in one sentence the words "divine" and "liberals," it does seem that conservatives are up against a theology. And the source of its authority is really nothing more than . . . the members of the secular Left themselves.

Remember: When liberals speak of the necessity of removing religious



zealots from politics, the appropriate response is, "Yeah: Guys like you have definitely got to go."

Bruce Millard
Jersey City, NJ

Rad Cat Fight

Matt Labash's report "ACT-UP vs. PETA: Clash of the Titans" (July 8 & 15) is an amusing portrait of two radical groups pouncing on each other. But Labash rightly portrays ACT-UP as in this instance on the side of the angels, or at least on the side of the humans. Advances in medical research, based in part on animal experimentation, have safeguarded the blood supply available for transfusions and have dramatically lowered the infection rate of infants born to HIV-infected mothers. Without continued research—without animal research—a vaccine for HIV and cures for AIDS and many other illnesses will be impossible.

Stephen Heinig
Gaithersburg, MD

Matt Labash's superb coverage of leftist heavyweights should provide a glimmer of mirth for conservatives recently forced to watch internecine Republican struggles over abortion, free trade, and the environment. It's good to see that the Left's incoherent ideology has reduced its righteous indignation—often monolithic—to squabblings over self-interested politics.

Of course, we can hope that ACT-UP vs. PETA was just the first round of the "tolerant" Left's public bouts. After all, the bestiality crowd has yet to show up (no really, we *love* animals).

Tadd C. Wilson
Fairfax, VA

Dole'll Have To Do

Your Scrapbook item "Worried About Dole? Join the Crowd" (July 8 & 15) reports the breathtaking news that Bob Dole is having trouble making his own case. This follows some umpteen other reports in your magazine making the same point. Enough already!

Whatever your animus against Dole, the time has long since come to stop complaining about his deficiencies and instead start making the case for him that he hasn't made for himself. It really shouldn't be too difficult. Start with the fact that he was a Goldwater man in 1964. Then give him long-overdue credit for being primarily responsible for attaching inflation-indexing to the Reagan tax cuts. Finally, give him credit for 35 years of being one of the most consistent, most important supporters of a strong defense and a vigorous, disciplined foreign policy.

Even if Dole doesn't set movement-conservative hearts aflutter, he would return competence, common sense, and a conservative tilt to the White House—and, importantly, begin to restore genuine respect for the presidency.

Quin Hillyer
Washington, DC

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Correspondence

Of Boris and Ballots

In his article "The New Russophobes Are Here" (July 1), Robert Kagan misspells my name and misrepresents my views. Contrary to Mr. Kagan's article, nowhere did I predict "widespread government fraud" at the Russian ballot box. Instead, in the article in *Freedom Review* that Mr. Kagan quotes, I said that "Yeltsin could win the election fairly" but that he was committed to remain in power "by hook or by crook." That is exactly what happened as the Russian president used Russian television as his campaign advertising agency, the state treasury as his campaign war chest, and regional governors as his campaign officials. Mr. Kagan may consider these practices consistent with free and fair elections but many observers, including the OSCE, disagree. The European Institute for Media particularly complained about the "thoroughly unfair campaign in the electronic media."

Similarly, I never suggested that in terms of Russian foreign policy there would be no real difference between Yeltsin and Zyuganov. In the *Freedom Review* article, I made it clear that Zyuganov would take a tougher stand vis-à-vis the West. My statement that the choice between Yeltsin and Zyuganov was between "shades of dark gray and very dark gray" was related to the choice for Russian voters rather than the outside world. I regret that Mr. Kagan is unable to see the difference between the two.

Finally, it is hard to understand why, even if one was too critical of the Russian elections and failed to see the difference between Yeltsin and Zyuganov, such a person should be called a Russophobe. Grigory Yavlinsky, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and Aleksandr Lebed (before he joined the government) all said similar or harsher things than I about Russian politics and electoral practices.

In the past, Soviet propaganda labeled anyone critical of the Kremlin's policies as being anti-Soviet. I am surprised that Robert Kagan is using similar techniques.

DIMITRI K. SIMES
WASHINGTON, DC

ROBERT KAGAN RESPONDS: ***I do apologize for spelling Dr. Simes's first name Dmitri instead of Dimitri. The remainder of his objections to my article consist of* ex post facto *wriggling out of embarrassing assertions that have since been disproven. What did Dr. Simes mean when he declared that Yeltsin was going to win the election "by hook or by crook"? It is a bit cute now to deny that this was a prediction of fraud. As for his view of the differences between Yeltsin and Zyuganov on foreign policy, the choice between "dark gray" and "very dark gray" sums it up. After the first round of elections, Dr. Simes observed that a majority of the Russian people had sent a strong message: "that they wanted not Western-style democracy, but a more paternalistic, semiauthoritarian policy with a far more assertive foreign policy." And he continues to depict the Russian bogeyman as lurking everywhere—even in Cuba.***

The refusal to recognize the possibility of genuine democratic change in Russia, combined with the constant warning of imaginary dangers from Russian "aggression," amounts to Russophobia.

Pro-Choice, But Why?

In his otherwise revealing article ("What Pro-Choice Republicans Believe," June 24), Tucker Carlson fails to say how it is that the nation's most prominent "pro-choice" Republicans have managed for so long to avoid articulating a rational basis for their position on abortion. After all, pro-life Republicans are regularly pressed for extended explanations of and justifications for their position. Could it be our old friend liberal media bias again?

The media claim to be skeptical about politicians, Republican and Democratic. But apparently this vaunted skepticism does not extend to pro-choice politicians or to the pro-choice "logic," about which the media are deplorably incurious.

NATHANIEL T. TRELEASE
CHEYENNE, WY

The Profs Against Europe

As one who has spent many years in Europe, I am familiar with its cultural decline and washed-out tone, and as a retired professor of French literature, I am painfully aware of the anti-European mood on most campuses. But unlike David Brooks ("Why Europe Is Boring America To Death," June 24), I assign all of the blame for that attitude to the feckless and politicized professoriate.

Thousands of young people still worship Mozart (though a former chairman of music told me, "We can no longer teach Mozart to our students") and fight through snowdrifts to see a Vermeer exhibit. *That* Europe, the ever-important one of our dazzling tradition of art and thought, is still kicking. Cultural depressions come and go over the centuries. Voltaire complained about the coarsening that followed the gilded 17th century in France. And he hadn't seen anything yet: It kept getting worse, through the aftermath of the French Revolution and the all-flattening vulgarization of taste recorded by Flaubert, Mallarmé, Ortega, and Prince Charles.

But the most golden age of art and literature (Brahms, Proust, Debussy, Cézanne, Matisse, and others) occurred anyway in the interstices. After World War II, most French and other European intellectuals agree, things seemed to get particularly hopeless.

But the main point is, what does it matter if Europe's current production seems dull to the culturally alert visitor if all it gave us so generously over the ages is still available? In sum: Nothing Brooks said can possibly absolve the American humanistic professoriate of their betrayal of the spirit.

ROBERT GREER COHN
STANFORD, CA

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the weekly Standard

SPEND MORE ON DEFENSE

During the Cold War, one's view of the appropriate goals of American foreign policy usually went hand in hand with one's notion of the proper level of spending on defense. Conservatives favored aggressive containment of the Soviet Union and wanted increased military spending. Liberals opposed active U.S. intervention abroad and demanded defense cuts.

No longer. These days, many conservatives call for increases in the defense budget while opposing American intervention overseas and seeking reductions in the scope of America's foreign commitments. Congressional Republicans have added $11 billion to President Clinton's request while arguing that the military should only be used in defense of "vital national security interests," not as a tool for promoting international order in places like Bosnia. Robert Dole has said he wants to err on the side of "spending a little too much on defense," but, with the exception of missile defense, he hasn't explained what the extra spending would be for.

CAN AMERICA'S ROLE AS GLOBAL LEADER BE SUPPORTED BY CURRENT LEVELS OF DEFENSE SPENDING? THE LIST OF PEOPLE WHO SAY NO ISN'T CONFINED TO REPUBLICAN HAWKS.

Many of today's liberals, on the other hand, have abandoned their old non-interventionist inclinations and have become, in the words of national security adviser Anthony Lake, avid "neo-Wilsonians," seeking to use American power to good ends across the globe. Arch-liberals like *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis have demanded vigorous military engagement in Bosnia to stop genocide and bring peace. The Congressional Black Caucus supported U.S. military intervention in Haiti to depose a military dictatorship and restore the elected president. Liberals have wanted to stamp out famine in Somalia, to halt genocide in Rwanda and Burundi, and to deploy U.S. forces to help in these and other humanitarian disasters.

Yet many of these same liberals have been complaining that the U.S. defense budget, which has been cut by 35 percent since the mid-1980s, is still too big. The *New York Times* editorial page, these days a haven for Bosnia hawks, is a budget dove when it comes to defense. The Black Caucus, vigorous militarists when the issue was Haiti, have rarely met a defense-spending proposal they liked, or for that matter even a foreign-aid proposal. If conservatives want to spend more and do less, liberals, far more recklessly, want to spend less and do more.

Can America's role as global leader be supported by current levels of defense spending? The list of people who say no is hardly confined to Republican hawks. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili has warned that the procurement budget for new weapons, cut by 71 percent since 1985, is now dangerously low. Sen. Joseph Lieberman, a leading Democrat on the Armed Services Committee, has declared that the administration's "Bottom-Up Review" of U.S. defense strategy is "already inadequate to the present and certainly to the future." Both the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Budget Office project shortfalls of $50 billion to $100 billion over the next five years just for funding *existing* force levels.

Most military experts acknowledge that we will not be able to carry out the officially declared "win-win" strategy of fighting two small wars in different regional theaters simultaneously. At a time when the likelihood of military action in the Persian Gulf in response to terrorist acts is increasing—along with possible trouble on the Korean peninsula—this inadequacy could soon prove perilous.

Liberal internationalists who favor global activism by the United States but oppose the defense spending needed to back it up are writing foreign policy checks that we will be unable to cash in coming years. Lake

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brags that the administration has "defined a post-Cold War role of leadership for the United States." But the Clinton administration's recent foreign policy successes—in Haiti, in Bosnia, and off the coast of Taiwan—were made possible by a military force constructed by Ronald Reagan. That force is now being rapidly depleted by the current inadequate level of defense spending.

There is willful self-delusion at work here. The international order that Clinton and other liberals seek to advance will not come about as a result of international goodwill, growing economic interdependence, or a common concern for the environment. Instead, it depends on the United States maintaining its military supremacy to deter and rebuff future threats to world peace.

In their refusal to acknowledge this fact, many liberals actually have much in common with Buchananite isolationists. Like the isolationists, they imagine that the current "threatless" world will somehow persist unaided into eternity. They don't understand that the world is without serious threats, to the degree it is, because American power and American hegemony are largely unchallenged. Like the isolationists, liberals want to know why the United States needs to spend as much money on defense as "the next 10 biggest military powers combined," without grasping the fact that the role of the United States in this post-Cold War era is entirely different from that of any other power.

The truth is, it will cost us much less to preserve the post-Cold War order than it did to create it. Today, defense spending is less than 20 percent of the total federal budget. In 1962, before the Vietnam War, defense spending accounted for nearly 50 percent of the budget. The increases necessary to maintain our global position and pursue an internationalist foreign policy would only require devoting to defense the same share of the budget it had *before* the Reagan buildup of the 1980s. This is not too high a price for maintaining peace and supporting our allies and our principles. ♦

Dole Has a Strategy!

by Fred Barnes

At Monday staff meetings of the Dole presidential campaign, no one tells Bob Dole any bad news. It's like politiburo meetings in the dying days of the Soviet Union, says a Dole strategist, with aides chiming in with reports that "tractor production is up 400 percent." One prominent Republican now refers to the Dole effort as "the Brezhnev campaign." That's kinder than the public criticism of Dole by his Republican allies—Jack Kemp, Sen. Al D'Amato of New York, Gen. Colin Powell, and Gov. George Voinovich of Ohio. Worse, Republicans insist they haven't the foggiest idea what Dole's strategy is. Only David Letterman professes to know: "Screwing up. . . . That's it, that's Bob Dole's strategy. He's acting presidential."

That's *not* it. But there really is a strategy, and Dole has been pursuing it with some success. Of course, he's been extraordinarily clumsy. But Dole has gotten roughly to where he wants to be anyway. The strategy, aimed particularly at giving the GOP a moderate tinge, is to take troublesome social issues off the table prior to the Republican national convention in August—assault weapons, abortion, the notion underpinning the gender gap that Dole is indifferent to women's interests. And Dole has largely accomplished this, though neither famously nor well.

"We couldn't go into the convention with those things ill-defined," says Scott Reed, Dole's campaign manager. "We couldn't go to San Diego without the abortion plank settled." Now, Dole strategists believe they'll avert a floor fight at the convention over abortion. More broadly, another Dole strategist says, "we want there to be a clear stage [at the convention] without a lot of underbrush. So we're trying to put our house in order prior to San Diego."

The trouble is that Dole, as a presidential candidate, doesn't do anything crisply and cleanly. Take the ban on assault weapons. Dole regarded his opposition to the ban as a political liability in the race against President Clinton. But when he was supposed to announce he wouldn't seek to repeal the ban, Dole balked. Instead, he declared in a July 9 speech in Richmond, Virginia, "We've moved beyond the debate over banning assault weapons." The next day, it was left to Dole spokesman Nelson Warfield to clarify Dole's statement. Repealing the ban, he said, "is no longer on [Dole's] agenda." Dole didn't finally put the issue to rest until he told CNN's Larry King on July 15 that he won't challenge the ban.

On abortion, Dole announced a compromise, then backed away from it, then returned to it. "It's one thing if Dole had made a smooth, seamless move to avoid a civil war over abortion," says a Dole adviser. "But this was klutzy." Dole first announced that lan-

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guage declaring the GOP's "tolerance" of dissenting views would be included in the party platform. This received a favorable reaction, even from pro-choice Republicans like Gov. Christine Whitman of New Jersey. But Dole soon said the tolerance language must be placed in the abortion plank itself. Pro-lifers erupted. So Dole settled for a separate tolerance plank. This time, pro-choice Republicans weren't as happy, and neither were pro-lifers. The phrase "personal conscience" in the new plank suggested to some pro-lifers that Dole was diluting the anti-abortion plank. So, should pro-lifers muster strong opposition, the Dole campaign will eliminate the phrase. "It's no big deal," says a senior campaign official.

On coping with the gender gap, Dole is obsessive. "He's terrified by the huge gender-gap numbers," says an adviser. "It's not the usual gender-gap numbers." Dole aides peg the permanent, structural gap at 10 to 12 percentage points. In other words, if 40 percent of American men identify as Republicans, only 28 to 30 percent of women do. But by late July, after Dole bickered with Katie Couric on the *Today* show and quibbled over whether tobacco is addictive, the gap for Dole's candidacy had reached 25 to 30 points.

ON COPING WITH THE GENDER GAP, DOLE IS OBSESSIVE. DOLE AIDES PEG THE PERMANENT, STRUCTURAL GAP AT 10 TO 12 PERCENTAGE POINTS.

Dole almost botched his first stab at shrinking the gap: his naming of Rep. Susan Molinari of New York as the convention keynote speaker. Dole and his staff had talked over the possibility. In fact, the campaign's convention team had pinpointed her as the top choice by late June. But naming her was only an "option" when Dole showed up for a TV interview with Larry King. Dole announced the selection of Molinari anyway. She hadn't been told, but Republican officials tracked her down in Buffalo, New York, by contacting the beeper of her husband, Rep. Bill Paxon of New York. Thus, she was summoned to the phone in time to be heard on CNN bailing out Dole. "Thank heavens for beepers," says a Dole aide. This prompted another aide to call the Dole Campaign "a conspiracy of one."

The tapping of Molinari drew praise from Republican moderates, but not as much as the naming of a centrist as Dole's vice-presidential running mate would. In discussions with advisers, Dole has talked up Powell, Whitman, and Gov. Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania. But Dole aides insist he's given up on Powell and won't under any circumstances pick Whitman. Her endorsement of President Clinton's veto of the ban on partial-birth abortion makes selecting her too risky. "Partial-birth is going to be a big [Dole] issue this fall," says a top Dole adviser.

With the abortion plank and Dole's stand on assault weapons settled, and with Molinari set as keynoter and Powell as a speaker on the convention's opening night, the Dole camp thinks it's ready for a smooth, effective convention, one dramatically different from the 1992 convention in Houston. Dole's acceptance speech, drafted with considerable help from novelist Mark Helprin, is already written. And Dole aides have a scheme for keeping TV cameras from dwelling on shots of wild-eyed, frothing Republicans on the convention floor. Speakers will not drone on. Rather, there'll be short speeches, often followed by video presentations and interviews with voters and Dole supporters. The idea is to keep the cameras riveted on ever-changing activity on the podium. Who knows? It may work. ◆

NORTON'S UTILITIES

by Andrew Ferguson

WHO SAYS THE Republican congressional leadership is brain-dead? Well, sure, a lot of people do, but the point is: those people are wrong.

How wrong was made evident on the weekend of July 13. Pessimists may have thought it a particular low point in the conservative revolution. Seven months into an election year, Bob Dole had as yet declined to unveil an economic-growth package of tax cuts or, for that matter, any kind of package of anything. The most important recent accomplishment of the Republican Congress had proved to be an increase in the minimum wage. And Trent Lott, in his fourth week as Senate majority leader, had taken to the floor of the Senate to complain that Democrats were being just unbelievably uncooperative.

Newt Gingrich, however, chose the same weekend to announce that the congressional leadership was at last going to push aggressively for a bold new initia-

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tive: an enormous, across-the-board, growth-oriented, supply-side tax cut for . . . the 290,000 registered Democrats in the District of Columbia.

Of course, the tax cut will include the District's 26,000 registered Republicans too, along with its 46,000 independents, unnumbered Wobblies, and any other Washingtonian who files a federal tax return. But the most striking feature of the initiative is that it's for the District and the District alone.

Gingrich made his announcement on *This Week with David Brinkley*: "We're looking very seriously—Trent Lott and I met Friday with Jack Kemp to discuss this—at a very dramatic tax change for the city of Washington to literally create an incentive for people to move back into the city." Note the special Gingrichian inflections: not just a dramatic tax change but a *very* dramatic tax change; not merely to create an incentive but to *literally* create an incentive. He means business.

As does Lott, who endorsed the measure the following day. The Senate version of the tax cut will be introduced this week by Republican Connie Mack of Florida and Democrat Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut. Mack has been promised accelerated hearings on the bill. The House version was introduced on April 15 by D.C. delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton, who can claim paternity, or whatever, for the whole idea. After Gingrich's announcement, House hearings on Norton's bill were pushed up to this week as well.

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Kent Lemon

The House and Senate versions are almost identical. Both would greatly increase personal exemptions: $15,000 for a single filer, $25,000 for an unmarried head of household, and $30,000 for married joint filers, regardless of children. All income beyond that would be taxed at a flat 15 percent. Taxes on capital gains for assets in the District would be eliminated. (The House bill applies this provision only to District residents; the Senate bill would eliminate cap-gains taxes on District assets for anyone who owned them, wherever he lives.) Tax rates on business income would not be cut, and the deductions for charitable contributions and mortgage interest would remain. Both bills contain a "hold-harmless" provision, which would allow District residents to choose which tax regime they would like to be taxed under: the current IRS regime or the new Republican-sponsored flat tax.

The premise for so radical a reform seems inarguable: The nation's capital is, as currently governed, a dump. The most visible symptom of this—not counting the litter, the bums, the murder rate, the dilapidated schools, the cratered streets, and the felonious mayor—is a steady flight of middle-class residents, now mostly black, to the suburbs. And the flight is accelerating. In the first five years of this decade, the District lost more taxpayers than during the 1980s.

But did the tax burden drive them out? Income tax rates in the District are indeed outrageous, among the highest in the country. The top marginal rate of 9.6 percent kicks in at $20,000. But in neighboring Prince George's County, Maryland, to which many of the District's middle-income taxpayers have fled, the overall tax burden is even higher. It seems clear that something other than high tax rates is pushing away the middle class—it might just be the litter, the bums, the murder rate, the schools, the streets, and the mayor. And in any case, the inordinately high rates paid by District residents are imposed by the District itself. The *federal* tax burden is the same for the District as for anywhere else in the United States.

Unless, of course, the Republican leadership has its way. The Republicans who are most enthusiastic about the D.C. tax cut are ardent supply-siders, including Mack, Gingrich, and Kemp. They see the District of Columbia as a supply-side laboratory: A flat tax can reaffirm to a skeptical world the magical effects of marginal-rate reductions. "Once America sees what economic growth through a lower income tax rate and a zero capital gains tax rate can produce," Mack says, "the rest of the country will demand the same opportunity for more jobs, stronger investment,

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and greater hope for the future."

The D.C. tax cut owes its current boomlet to Kemp. "This is Jack's deal, all the way," says an aide to the Republican leadership. "It's all about his close relationship with Lott and Gingrich." Kemp's influence as a party leader has suffered over the last year, with his indecision about running for president and his late-hit endorsement of Steve Forbes over Bob Dole in March. But it's still true that the leaders of today's Republican Congress—Lott, Gingrich, Mack, majority leader Dick Armey—have been Kemp protégés since the early and mid-80s.

THE TAX CUT OWES ITS BOOMLET TO KEMP. "THIS IS JACK'S DEAL, ALL THE WAY," SAYS AN AIDE. "IT'S ABOUT HIS RELATIONS WITH LOTT AND GINGRICH."

They remain loyal to him and meet with him frequently. At the most recent meeting, on July 12, Kemp plugged the Norton bill hard. He had spent the better part of 1995 selling Norton on the flat-tax idea. She originally balked, worrying that a flat tax might benefit the rich, increase property values, encourage "gentrification," and other horribles. In the end the plan was fashioned so it would appear sufficiently "progressive," meaning few business incentives were included.

Kemp stoked Gingrich and Lott's interest throughout the spring and finally brought Lott together with Norton for a private meeting two weeks ago. When Lott, Gingrich, and Kemp met on July 12, Lott agreed to co-sponsor Mack's bill in the Senate and Gingrich agreed to push the tax cut publicly. Two days later, on the Brinkley show, Sam Donaldson asked him about the District's multifaceted problems and the speaker jumped right in. Literally.

The leadership's enthusiasm has not been matched among the rank and file. Harrumphing privately, many Republican lawmakers wonder why, given their failure to cut the taxes of their own constituents, they should now give a hefty tax cut to Ralph Nader, Kay Graham, and Al Hunt, among other lucky D.C. taxpayers.

There are more mechanical concerns as well. "I've never seen a revenue bill brought up this late in the session," says another leadership aide. "And I've never seen a tax bill endorsed by the leadership before [congressional staff] has done any economic analysis on its effects."

All these concerns loom in the imposing figure of Bill Archer, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. Ways and Means, of course, has the constitutional responsibility to originate any revenue measure. And Archer doesn't like this one. In unusually colorful language, he called the D.C. tax cut "silly." (For Archer, that's colorful.)

Still—and remarkably—some staffers in the leadership say the bill has a good chance of passing, even in this session, even by September. "Better than 60 percent" are the odds given by one staffer involved. Norton herself is similarly sanguine.She's made it clear that she's ready to move on to her next project: full political representation for the District in Congress. It is the new progressive dream: representation without taxation. ♦

Atlanta's Five-Ring Circus

by Tucker Carlson

Between preparations for traffic snarls, heat waves, and terrorist attacks, city officials in Atlanta had a lot to contend with during the week preceding the opening ceremonies at this summer's Olympic Games. Yet Mayor Bill Campbell and his wife Sharon still found time to organize and host what they hoped would be one of the largest city-sponsored events in the history of Atlanta, the "In Celebration of Women" festival, held the weekend of July 13.

Over the course of two days, the city offered more than 100 different activities aimed at women, ranging from a female-led road race to free mammograms and poetry readings. Energy secretary Hazel O'Leary signed up as a headline speaker for the festival, as did Harriett Woods, the director of the National Women's Political Caucus, and Muriel Siebert, "the first woman to own a seat on the New York Stock Exchange." Lecturers, appearing in six "Empowerment Tents" downtown, prepared seminars on topics such as "economic justice," domestic violence, civil rights, the Equal Rights Amendment, and "political empowerment and networking." For entertainment, the city booked performances by a singer from a band called the Sounds of Blackness, as well as a stage show by Bosom Buddies, a

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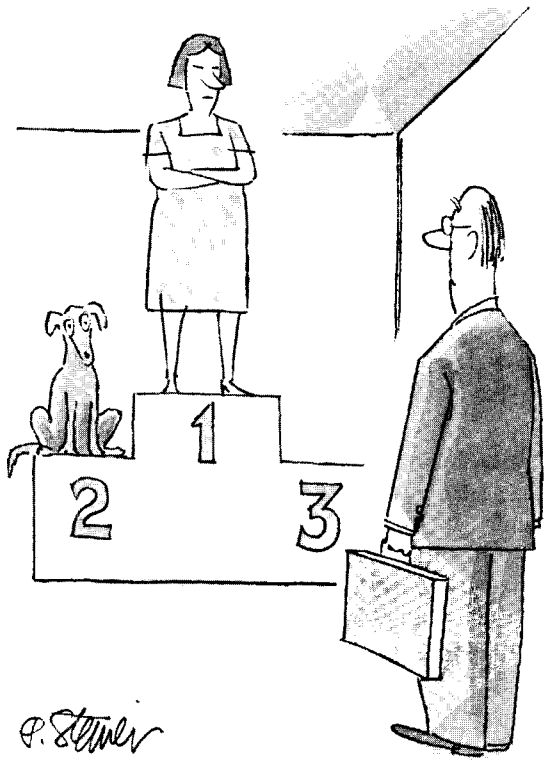
"song-and-dance troupe of breast cancer survivors."

The festival, explained Atlanta first lady Sharon Campbell, was intended to "raise awareness of the strength and spirit of women," even as it drew attention to "the successes of women and the struggles of women."

Fair enough. But what did it all have to do with the Olympic Games? As it turned out, most people didn't have a clue. Of the more than 150,000 participants city officials confidently predicted would come to the event, fewer than 1,000 actually showed up. (Sharon Campbell was unfazed, declaring that "the sisterhood in the event has been great.") But to many of those professionally involved with the Olympics—the organizers, the sponsors, and, most of all, the press—staging a tribute to institutional feminism days before the world's largest sporting event seemed perfectly natural. With the attention of the world focused on Atlanta, a little political proselytizing was simply too tempting to pass up.



Peter Steiner

It wasn't the first time ideologues have used the Games for grandstanding. The Olympics by its nature has always been something of a political event. Yet this year, without the tension of an ideological rivalry between East and West, the Olympics has become a forum for a more banal kind of political posturing. The route of the Olympic torch, which was carried across America, was designed to bypass a county that passed an anti-gay-rights ordinance—even as America welcomed athletes from nations that put practicing homosexuals to death. All in all, lectures on the role of race and gender in sports have replaced whipping the East Germans as a media-inspired obsession. As liberal sportswriter Frank Deford put it, "Now that we don't have to prove our Way of Life by beating the Commies in an artificial medal competition, the Summer Games are even less compelling athletically."

Less compelling, certainly, for many of those covering the event. While the U.S. basketball squad, doubtless one of the most competent teams ever assembled in any sport, received relatively dismissive and sometimes hostile coverage in the days leading up to the Games, press outlets gorged themselves on stories that had little to do with actual athletic competition—a subject many reporters appeared bored with even before the opening ceremonies. Instead, countless newspaper features and magazine pieces explored the legacy of racism and the role of women in the Olympics. *Newsweek* ran a chart illustrating the effect of the civil-rights movement on the Games. So many stories were done on the prowess of women athletes—including a *Newsweek* cover and a 4,000-word piece in the *New York Times Magazine*—that a poll taken in July by *U.S. News and World Report* showed that fully 66 percent of Americans had become convinced that female Olympians would soon beat their male counterparts in head-to-head competition. (Physiologists, meanwhile, most of whom apparently don't read *Newsweek*, were less sanguine in their predictions.)

Much of the coverage of the role of women in the Games contained a barely concealed, if somewhat silly, ideological agenda. Stories meant to pump up female Olympians frequently veered off into hostile asides about the malignant influence of traditional male sports, particularly football, which was usually compared unfavorably with female athletics as warlike, exclusive, victory-centric, and therefore bad. "When women bring their values to men's sports," explained Donna Lopiano of the newly famous Women's Sports Foundation in a typical quote, "you'll see you can still be competitive, but respect your opponent rather than dealing with them as enemies." Pop anthropology comes to the sports pages.

Television coverage in the weeks preceding the Games was, predictably, even worse. A review of features on the Olympics culled from the Media Research

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Center's video library found the networks vastly more concerned with cutting-edge social questions than with mere sports. One NBC segment broadcast in July, representative of the genre, profiled the life of Alice Coachman, who won the high jump in the 1948 games, establishing the women's record in the event at a little over five and a half feet. In the piece, titled "Olympic Glory Delayed," Coachman was introduced as the "first black woman in the world to win an Olympic gold medal." But, the reporter intoned, "she came home at a time when not all records by black women athletes were remembered." The unmistakable point: Coachman's rightful glory was obscured by the racism of the age, leaving her forgotten to history, at least until producers from NBC arrived at the scene.

Not a bad little morality tale. Except it didn't quite happen that way. In fact, whatever indignities Alice Coachman suffered under Jim Crow (and doubtless she suffered), she was far from ignored when she returned victorious from London in 1948. Rather, she was something of a celebrity at the time, the guest of honor at a party thrown by Count Basie, feted at a ceremony held by her hometown of Albany, Ga. Her achievement was recorded in textbooks and encyclopedias. In the past two decades alone, Coachman has been featured in well over 100 news stories. In other words, the real story wasn't half as interesting as the TV version—just as the 1996 Olympic Games may prove less interesting than the political nonsense surrounding them. ♦

SWING, VOTERS, SWING

by Michael Barone

Sterling Heights, Mich.

POLL RESULTS ARE THE SHEET MUSIC of politics; to hear the melody you have to listen to voters talking. The poll numbers have shown Bill Clinton far ahead of Bob Dole, with Ross Perot picking up some votes from both when he's included. The polls tend to suggest the election is over.

Last week I went to swing suburbs in Michigan, the nation's bellwether state in the last three presidential elections, and listened to what voters were saying. My conclusion is that voters are still tentative in their preferences, more tentative than voters I listened to a few months ago.

Sure, one does encounter voters strongly committed to Bill Clinton—but not very many, and their praise is usually vague and occasionally inaccurate. "I like his views on everything," says baby-toting Michelle Metelic, 22, of Sterling Heights, "on schools, on abortion." Another young mother likes his "cutting taxes, raising up the minimum wage to $5.15, especially trying to end the war in Bosnia." "I would like to keep the economy going as it's going," says James Hopkins, 46, a roofer from Troy. But few others mention the economy one way or the other.

PRAISE FOR CLINTON IS USUALLY VAGUE. BUT IF CLINTON SUPPORT IS OFTEN LUKEWARM, DOLE SUPPORT OFTEN ISN'T SUPPORT AT ALL.

And much of the president's support seems, as it did last spring, tenuous and contingent. "Probably Clinton again," says Detroit data processor Kathleen Keebler, 44. "I'm not all that disappointed with what Clinton has done," says Clinton-leaning Sharon Van Leaven, 54, Troy. But 1992 Clinton voter Nuri Ata, 60, a General Motors employee originally from Turkey, has soured: "I don't think he's truthful." Some Clinton voters insist scandals don't bother them, but they sound a bit defensive. "I don't pay attention. Innocent till proven totally guilty," says Olive Barnes, 53, a Warren engineering worker. But that sounds as defensive as Dole supporter Dorothy Frutig, 74, sounds plaintive: "I don't understand how people don't think morals are a criterion for the presidency."

If Clinton support is often lukewarm, Dole support often isn't support at all. "Definitely not Clinton," insist half a dozen Michigan voters. And Dole? "Wishy-washy. I don't see him taking stands he should take," says engineer Mike Velasco, 39, Sterling Heights. "Older and behind the times," says engineer Jeff Justice, 34, Oak Park. "He needs to be stronger, more decisive, to relate to people," says truck-repair-shop owner Mike Radlick, 43, Fraser. "He's a bungler; he has made so many errors," says Sue Wilk, 27, a Dearborn Heights teacher. "My reservation is he might be too old," says Leslie Geoghegan, 53, Dearborn Heights homemaker. Presumably Dole will eventually get the votes of these Clinton-haters. But he'll have to work for them, and many—attention, Speaker Gingrich—may not turn out to vote at all.

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Or may vote for Ross Perot. To a few he is the paladin of 1992. "I like Ross Perot. He's a fiery, aggressive guy, and we need that right now," says Jim McAlister, 25, Harriston Township electrician. "He can make changes everyone is looking for. He's not the same old same old," says Robert Fowler, 31, a floor coverer from Troy. But many more think he's nuts. "The man's got a loony streak," says Mike Radlick. "He's a lunatic," says Kathy Overwater, 42, Dearborn nurse. "A little guy with a big mouth," says Ed Watt, 77, General Motors retiree. Voters seem to know much more about Perot than Dole and to have more specific to say about him than Clinton.They attack him for leaving the 1992 race and then reentering ("If he was determined, he would have stuck to it the first time," says Connie Robbins, 29, a Detroit sales clerk) and for taking the election away from George Bush. John Krakowiak, 24, a Ford engineer and a Perot voter in 1992, said he made a "mistake. I thought he was such a good businessman he could get done what he said. But business is different from government." And Mark Harris, 60, a Ford retiree from Dearborn who joined the Perot movement, left because "he doesn't delegate; he wants to make all the decisions." Others, when Perot's name comes up, roll their eyes and mutter "Get a life" or "Oh, God!"

ENGLER AND WHITMAN REACHED THE THRESHOLD OF ACCEPTABILITY FOR THEIR OFFICES. IT IS UNCLEAR THAT DOLE CAN REACH IT FOR THE PRESIDENCY.

The superficial meaning of the poll numbers is that Bill Clinton this year is like Richard Nixon in 1972 or Lyndon Johnson in 1964, a personally flawed and scandal-tarred incumbent voters are willing to settle for, because he is skilled, because things have been going pretty well, and because the opposition seems extreme. But the words I heard in Michigan suggest that most voters don't embrace these propositions. Only a few praise Clinton's skills, relatively few speak as if there were a relationship between a president's actions and life on the ground, and Dole is seen more often as empty than extreme.

The more apt analogy may prove to be with Michigan governor Jim Blanchard in 1990 and New Jersey governor Jim Florio in 1993, both well-known incumbents with arguably worthy accomplishments, but one with shaky standing and the other in serious trouble. They were operating, as Bill Clinton will be starting in August, under public-financing schemes limiting both sides to about equal spending, and they chose, as Clinton has done, to spend heavily early on negative ads to disqualify their not-very-well-known opponents. It seemed to work; both Blanchard and Florio boasted 20-point leads in October, as Clinton has now. But Republican challengers Engler and Whitman stayed cool, saved their money, and then outspent the other side in the last weeks, reminding voters of what they didn't like about the incumbents all along—and won narrowly.

Engler and Whitman both reached the threshold of acceptability for their offices, while it is not clear whether Dole will reach the higher threshold for the job he seeks. But what I heard this week suggests it's possible, though very far from assured, that the numbers in this race could turn around, as they did in Michigan and New Jersey in the 1990s, and not stay solid, as they did nationally in 1972 and 1964.

***Michael Barone is a senior writer at* U.S. News and World Report.**

THE MEDIA'S TRUE COLORS

by Tod Lindberg

HERE WE HAVE A FELLOW who has made $6 million since January off his first novel—a novel that won nearly unanimous critical acclaim and sold more than one million copies, with another 1.5 million coming out in paperback. His book turned into a pop culture obsession on the order of "Who shot J.R.?" and its movie adaptation is being directed by Mike Nichols, starring Tom Hanks, Emma Thompson, and Jack Nicholson. That it should now be necessary to put in a good word for such a lucky, talented guy as this author, because he is under relentless attack, is astonishing. But here we are.

The author is *Newsweek* columnist Joe Klein—formerly known as "Anonymous," the author of *Primary Colors*, the stunning portrait of the Clinton-like presidential primary campaign of Jack Stanton, philandering southern governor. The attack is coming from his

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fellow journalists and it would seem to be a shot aimed at the heart: Klein's very integrity and credibility as a journalist are in the dock, and he is being found wanting, wanting, wanting.

The problem is not the fact that Klein is "Anonymous." It is that Klein has specifically and directly and on several occasions denied to journalists that he is "Anonymous." To the editor of the *Washington Post*'s Style section, who challenged him to stake his journalistic credibility on his denial. To CBS, for which he is a consultant, on camera. And to numerous other reporters.

Does this dissimulation not—you can feel the self-righteousness and sanctimony heating up—does it not gravely affect Joe Klein's credibility as a journalist? How can he ask others to believe him when he himself has . . . has . . . has *lied*? If the most precious thing a journalist has is his credibility, and Klein has thrown his away, does it not thereby strike a blow against the credibility of all journalists? And does it not feed the suspicions of a public grown increasingly cynical about those whose job it is to report the news? Quick, to an ethics seminar!

Sean Delonas

Joe Klein

Iver Peterson noted in a "News Analysis" in the *New York Times*, "The question is, is Mr. Klein somehow morally or ethically at fault for not only denying his authorship, but going out of his way to deny it?" Or as Howard Kurtz put in the *Washington Post*, "Klein's admission . . . unleashed a flood of criticism, put his CBS job in jeopardy and turned the tables on a high-profile writer known for his caustic judgments about politicians."

Spake Mark Halperin, an ABC producer: "On a personal level, many of his friends who asked him directly feel hurt because they're not used to being lied to repeatedly about something they came to care about a great deal."

Moaned Ken Auletta, the *New Yorker*'s media critic: "Joe fibbed, and that's not acceptable. He not only hurts himself, he hurts the business of journalism. It grants a weapon to the enemies of the press, the feeling that we're all seedy, slimy bums."

Opined Kevin Smith, chairman of the ethics committee of the Society of Professional Journalists: "You . . . never give up your obligation to deal truthfully with people, whether you are working on a story or in your personal life. So I think Mr. Klein has lost credibility here, and that hurts all of us."

Sanford Ungar, dean of the school of communications at American University: "He's going to pay a terrific penalty in terms of his credibility."

Lane Venardos, CBS news vice president: "Clearly, it's impossible to have a relationship with someone—even at the low-level consultancy Joe had with us—who is not telling the truth." (Clearly, the "low-level" defense pioneered by the Clinton White House is catching on.)

Here is the flavor of the questioning at the New York press conference at which Klein came forward: "As a journalist, how were you able to do that? To lie about your identity? . . . I've talked to a number of your friends yesterday and today who say that they have been betrayed by you. . . . What about your credibility with your own readers at *Newsweek*? I mean, basically you had to lie. How can you expect your readers to believe anything that you would write in any of your columns?"

As for Klein himself, in the face of this onslaught, he has tried splitting hairs, drawing a distinction between lying in the service of a prior commitment to his publisher to maintain his anonymity and other, worse forms of lying, and he has tried being self-righteous right back: "Joe Klein has never lied in a column. And never will, at least not knowingly." (Joe Klein, meet Bob Dole.) But he seems a bit shaken. In an article "Anonymous" published in the *New York Times Book Review* in May, he observed, "People who've never read the book have speculated with great authority about who wrote it. I realize that I've been the commercial beneficiary of all this, and that much of it was inevitable, but it's still been pretty perverse and occasionally nauseating. Too late, I gained a better sense of how Jack Stanton must have felt as the witless, ravenous pack descended on him in New Hampshire." All the more so, no doubt, since he came clean.

The essential fact that Klein has to deal with is that he has crossed the line into celebrityhood—he is now someone who is more written about than writing.

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Sanford Ungar's warning about the "terrific penalty" Klein will pay is truly goofy: Joe Klein has now been identified as the single hottest literary commodity in America, a John-Grisham-cum-Bob-Woodward. He can do *anything* he wants and Sandy Ungar will sit up and pay attention, or else Sandy Ungar will relegate himself to the sidelines of the American political and cultural action.

As for the press ethicists, what can one say? If CBS has a problem with Klein's lying, the network will now have to weigh that problem against the fact that Klein is a Superstar. It's hard to say how the balance will come out, but one thing you can bet on is that Klein's next network consulting deal—Does anybody really think there won't be one if he wants one?—is going to be for a lot more money than he's getting from CBS now.

Honesty? Credibility? The denunciations of Klein would be a little more honest and credible were they at least accompanied by an admission of how sneaky the press is as a general rule and how often its members have to practice one form of deception or another to do their job—from keeping their sources secret to feigning ignorance to drawing people out with false displays of sympathy. With apologies to Winston Churchill, you might even say it *takes* a bodyguard of lies to get at the truth.

But even that is rather self-righteous, and self-righteousness is a frame of mind journalists almost inevitably fall into when they talk about themselves. Klein, writing as "Anonymous," actually managed to have a sense of humor about the press — the "scorps," for scorpions, as the folks in the Stanton campaign call them.

It's a pity Anonymous is gone now, because he could probably have written a wickedly funny and devastatingly accurate portrait of the modern media world. We'll see if Joe Klein can do it—or if, deprived of his anonymity, he's just too much a part of it now.

***Tod Lindberg is editorial-page editor of the* Washington Times.**

Rock the Leftist Vote

by Ari Redbord

As George Stephanopoulos stepped to the mike, the young crowd whistled and cheered. "Because you voted in 1992," Stephanopoulos said, "there are more student loans for young people. Because you voted in 1992, there are fewer guns on the streets. Because you voted in 1992, we made efforts to clean up the environment and to protect a woman's right to choose. But in 1994, a lot of young people stayed home and you saw a Republican Congress come in led by Speaker Gingrich, who tried to take away a woman's right to choose."

This was the non-partisan message of a non-partisan rally organized in part by the non-partisan organization Rock the Vote, run by a former Clinton White House official and supposedly "dedicated to protecting freedom of speech, educating young people, and motivating them to speak out." Other speakers at the rally included heartthrob Billy Baldwin and a token conservative, Republican pollster Kellyanne Fitzpatrick, who described the event as "a Hard Rock Café filled with screaming 17-year-old girls who only wanted to catch a glimpse of Baldwin and Stephanopoulos."

This was only one instance of the unabashedly left-leaning campaign of Rock the Vote to capture the next generation of voters. The organization was founded in 1990 as a vehicle to fight the arrest and prosecution of a Florida record-store owner charged with selling an outlawed 2 Live Crew album to a minor. Its founding fathers include Steve Barr, who left the organization to work for the 1992 Clinton campaign and later became chairman of the Democratic party in California; Virgin Records executive Jeff Ayeroff; and other officials of the recording industry.

In 1992, Rock the Vote began a massive campaign of public-service announcements, along with registration drives at music stores and rock and rap concerts, after President Bush vetoed the so-called motor voter bill. These efforts helped to reverse a twenty-year trend of declining political participation among 18-to-24-year-olds: 42.8 percent of them voted in 1992, up from 36.2 percent in 1988. When the smoke lifted, Bush was defeated and on May 20, 1993, Bill Clinton signed the act into law, with a posse of Rock the Voters standing beside him.

Rock the Vote is best known for its splashy spots on MTV, and the ties between the organization and the cable channel go far beyond the public-service announcements featuring LL Cool J, En Vogue, R.E.M, and Aerosmith. If you call MTV for information on its own "Choose or Lose" voter-awareness scheme, the receptionist quickly suggests dialing 1-800-CALL-RTV—the direct line to Rock the Vote. The two groups travel together in the cable channel's

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custom-designed Choose or Lose bus.

MTV makes no secret of its Democratic bias, and that's completely kosher; it's a for-profit venture whose parent company's president, Sumner Redstone, is an unabashed liberal. By contrast, Rock the Vote is non-partisan because it has to be; it receives tax-deductible donations and by law cannot endorse candidates or have a party affiliation.

Even so, at a recent Washington rally, House minority leader Richard Gephardt was introduced as "the next speaker of the House." Gephardt was startled by the introduction and attempted to calm the raucous crowd by informing them that this was a "non-partisan, bipartisan event." One week earlier, the only speakers confirmed for the rally were liberal Democrats Gephardt, David Bonior, Barney Frank, and Pat Schroeder, as well as a lone Republican, Howard McKeon, according to College Republican national chairman Joe Galli. "If we hadn't done any work on our end," Galli says, "there would have been absolutely no balance to the event." While Galli and the Republicans did indeed help put together an impressive showing, including House Budget Committee chairman John Kasich, Galli still says Rock the Vote has "a very left-leaning, liberal slant."

Last year, the rapper and sitcom actress Queen Latifah received Rock the Vote's highest honor, the Patrick Lippert Award. "Right now with the Congress being swung to the right," she declared in her acceptance speech, "my generation is in a lot of trouble. We have a lot of people making decisions about us who couldn't care less about us."

Rock the Vote's program director Mark Strama, who worked as a researcher for Ann Richards's 1990 gubernatorial campaign in Texas, responded to Latifah's remarks by saying, "As an organization, nothing we stand for prevents individuals from expressing their private opinions about policy. If she didn't have opinions about government, she wouldn't be the activist she is."

Now Rock the Vote, in conjunction with Black Youth Vote, has begun a campaign to attract African-American voters through what the two groups call a "hip-hop coalition." Among the urban dynamos who have signed on are such radicals as Public Enemy's Chuck D, who in the wake of the L.A. riots opined, "In an organized revolution, everybody would have gone into Hollywood and Beverly Hills and burned it down." In February, Rock the Vote decided to celebrate Chuck D's contributions to the community at a ceremony where he asserted that conservatives are "leaving black people bleak and in the dark. . . . The climate in America with Buchanan and Dole is saying, 'F— black folk.'"

Queen Latifah and Chuck D, offensive as they might be, are simply performers mouthing off—celebrity front men whose knowledge of politics probably ends with the name Stephanopoulos. As Chuck D said in Public Enemy's biggest hit, you have to "fight the powers that be," and at Rock the Vote the power is its executive director, Ricki Seidman. Seidman's resumé reads like a fantasy of liberal and Democratic activism. As legal director for Norman Lear's People for the American Way, she was responsible for the infamous attack-ad on the judicial record of Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork. She next moved to Senator Edward Kennedy's office shortly after Clarence Thomas was nominated to the Supreme Court, and she is credited with pressuring the reluctant Anita Hill to come out with her harassment story. When the Judiciary Committee failed to listen, according to David Brock's *The Real Anita Hill*, Seidman helped leak the story to the press. During the 1992 presidential campaign, she moved to Little Rock to help run Clinton's war room, and after the victory she became an assistant to the president and a counselor to chief of staff Mack McLarty. She joined Rock the Vote in November 1994.

How could a political operative so utterly partisan head a non-partisan group? Seidman explains: "My biggest hobby was music, I have friends who are musicians, and I was burned out being in the White House and I wanted to do something totally different."

Seidman, Strama, and Rock the Vote clearly comprehend the significance of the youth vote. Those in the 18-to-24-year-old range will transform the politics of the next decades; Rock the Vote has taken charge in an attempt to forge and control that destiny. It may be that 50 percent of the country's 25 million young voters will go to the polls in 1996. With all the splash and dazzle and sleight-of-hand mise-en-scène of an MTV video, Rock the Vote is laboring mightily to bias their choice—in a non-partisan way, of course.

Ari Redbord is a student at Duke University and the publisher of the **Duke Review**.

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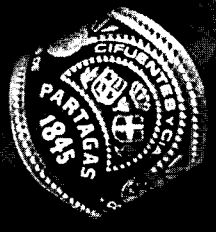

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Why the Simpson Case Endures

By Christopher Caldwell

Two years after murdering his ex-wife Nicole and Ronald Goldman and eight months after being acquitted of those murders, O.J. Simpson recently made front-page news. He hosted his friend A.C. Cowlings, two former trial jurors, and various gang members and philanthropists at his Brentwood mansion to support Stop the Violence–Increase the Peace, a gang-counseling foundation that was for some inexplicable reason raising money for battered wives. A week later, it was reported that Simpson would seek custody of his two children on the grounds that the Brown family was not raising them in an "interracial environment." A week after that, a 1992 letter was released in which Simpson blasted his former sponsor Hertz for employing a "cripple" like Bo Jackson and the HIV-positive Magic Johnson.

Why on earth has O.J. been in the news in recent weeks? Does anyone really care about O.J. anymore? As it happens, yes. And passionately. "I have never seen *any* story with the legs that this one has," says Geraldo Rivera. "It is as compelling today as in the second half of the trial." After his nightly CNBC show began aggressively running O.J. coverage, Rivera's ratings rose by a factor of seven. He still covers the Simpson case whenever the smallest news breaks, and his two nightly airings now draw as many viewers as Larry King, once the unassailable Leviathan of cable talk television. CNN's coverage of *l'affaire* O.J., meanwhile, raised its own ratings fivefold. King himself has done *seven* Simpson shows in recent weeks. *Burden of Proof*, a lunch-hour daily show launched right after the trial's conclusion, is still largely about the case.

Then there are the books. Prosecutor Christopher Darden's autobiography-cum-trial-memoir, *In Contempt*, with 900,000 copies in print, has spent sixteen weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, including several in the number-one spot. Number one for the past two weeks has been Manson prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi's *Outrage: Five Reasons Why O.J. Simpson Got Away with Murder*, which, with 400,000 copies in print by mid-July, is Norton's fastest-selling book in seventy years. Darden's colleague Marcia Clark received a $4.2 million advance for her own book, due at the turn of the year from Viking. Books are also coming from Dominick Dunne, Joe McGinniss, Jeffrey Toobin, Ron Goldman's family, Johnnie Cochran, Johnnie Cochran's ex-wife, and others still.

Why this interest? If nine months after the verdict, the Simpson case remains an open wound on American public opinion, it can hardly be because of any untied strands in the plot. Vincent Bugliosi is correct to scoff at those who call the Simpson case a whodunit:

> We all know what a whodunit is. That's a case where there is evidence pointing to four, five, or six suspects, and the question is, whodunit? But here, not just some of the evidence but all of the evidence pointed to one person and one person only, O.J. Simpson. Not one speck pointed to anyone else.

Nor is the interest in the case without a compass: While anti-O.J. products are selling like hotcakes, *pro*-O.J. products are taking a pounding. Infomercial Marketing Report announced that its widely ballyhooed $29.95 O.J.-interview videotape had grossed only $900,000 and sold only 30,000 copies—fewer than many nature videos the company puts out. What's more, the books by Simpson's defense lawyers have been remarkably unsuccessful—Alan Dershowitz's book spent a brief time on the bestseller lists, but the Robert Shapiro and Gerald Uelmen confessionals didn't sell well at all. Americans vote with their wallets, and overwhelmingly they think a horrible miscarriage of justice took place when Simpson was acquitted of the murders in October 1995.

So there's something larger than soap-opera curiosity or celebrity-worship at play in Americans' fascination with the O.J. Simpson case. And that something is race.

New Yorker writer Jeffrey Toobin, whose book is due out in September, puts it this way: "Ten years from now, the importance of this case for race relations will be all people remember about it." A

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recent Learning Channel special narrated by Julian Bond predicted that the trial's big effect would be to set back racial comity for years to come. Diana Trilling speaks for many white people when she writes that the "fever of delight" among blacks she saw cheering the verdict on television "was the most disturbing feature of the trial."

The racial differences on the matter have only intensified since the verdict. Gallup polls found that whites went from feeling it was the "wrong verdict" by a margin of 49-42 just days after the trial to 53-36 two weeks later. Blacks felt it was the "right verdict" by 78-18 in the immediate aftermath and by 89-6 two weeks later. "Even educated African Americans I have known and loved for years are rooting for the home team," says Geraldo Rivera. "People who are so objective and analytical on almost any other topic, including race, seem to me irrational on this one. At every trough in my career, I could always count for support on the minority community. And for the first time ever, in twenty-six years in public life, I have received an outpouring of hostility from the community that has always been my core support." Meanwhile, the most recent poll, taken by Gallup for CNN in May, showed white opinion hardening to near-unanimity, with 79 percent considering Simpson either "definitely" or "probably" guilty.

Elite opinion is unusually in synch with mass opinion on the Simpson case. In virtually all polls, belief in Simpson's guilt rises steadily along with income level and education. And both white and black thinkers worry that the consequences of the O.J. trial could be "ominous": Whites, who now fear that the justice system is stacked against them, may be on the verge of an explosive rethinking.

The *good* news of the O.J. trial—ironically, given the role "white racism" played in the jury's decision to acquit—is that it has sparked no discernible rise in white racism. One post-verdict CBS poll asked, "Has the outcome of the O.J. Simpson trial made a difference in your feelings about Colin Powell running for president?" One can say the question is an insult to American intelligence and still be glad it was asked: This is precisely the kind of irrational political spillover one might expect with racism resurgent, and 91 percent of whites said the verdict would not affect their feelings on Powell at all. Indeed, one might argue that whites are especially bitter about the verdict because they felt their response to the case and its aftermath was honest and without bias. If you had asked people what they knew about O.J. Simpson, they would have said "football star," or "Nordberg in the *Naked Gun* movies," or "the Hertz car-rental guy." "Black" would have been sixth or seventh on the list, and that is rare for an African-American celebrity.

Anecdotal evidence comes when you look at attitudes towards interracial romance. The Simpson defense team, aiming to turn a black man married to a white woman into a racial symbol, stressed the perennial hostility of bigots to interracial romance. But if that hostility were universal in white America, what explains the national response to the purported romance between Marcia Clark and Chris Darden? "People liked it," says one nationally known Simpson commentator who asked not to be quoted. What's more, "they were titillated by it."

In the weeks after the verdict, Gallup did favorable/unfavorable ratings on all the participants in the trial. It is noteworthy that Mark Fuhrman, whose racism, revealed on the stand, turned the trial around, had a marginally higher unfavorable rating among whites (88 percent) than among blacks (83 percent). He also had basically identical unfavorable ratings from self-identifying conservatives (88 percent) and self-identifying liberals (87 percent). These numbers offer both a universal repudiation of Fuhrman's racism and an indication that "white racism" of the traditional variety is nearly extinct.

And yet there is no question that whites are hopping mad about something. They are mad that a murderer went free; they are mad that their anger is characterized as racism; and they are mad that a great many Americans are sympathetic to a murderer because they share skin color with him. Says Rivera, "I think that there is now a huge number of white people saying, either consciously or unconsciously, 'Screw them. They didn't care that O.J. Simpson got away with murder, we don't care now about the fate of these people.'" In the wake of the Simpson trial, white attitudes are perfectly clear: The vast majority of whites do not hate black people. They *do* hate a judicial system that allows killers to walk free, and they view the "race card" as a linchpin of that system.

In this light, it was Simpson defense counsel Johnnie Cochran who was responsible for turning the case into a milestone in the troubled history of American race relations. By asking the jury to free a murderer in order to "send a message" about racial justice, Cochran yoked the verdict to a broader civil rights agenda. In so doing, he made racial justice the enemy of plain old justice. And he led Americans to scan the broader civil rights landscape for other cases in which,

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in the name of justice, justice is no longer being done. The evidence may suggest to them that the cost of America's civil rights dogma has proved far dearer than they are willing to pay.

Civil-rights-style politics has been the template for every scheme to reconfigure our society over the last three decades. It is now the nation's guiding ideology and the preferred route to political power for *all* groups, not just ethnic or racial ones. Feminism managed to turn a majority of the population into a persecuted minority. Even Christian conservatives talk about their "minority" status, though more than 70 percent of Americans describe themselves as believing Christians. Civil-rights politics is no longer a conservative or a liberal thing: It may be the *only* politics we have.

Under its tenets, a painful racial insult becomes not only the moral equivalent of a physical beating, but in time a juridical equivalent as well. And the outrage once reserved for vicious crimes of violence is now expended on cruelties that do not cause blood to flow. Ask yourself which you would be more ashamed to admit to your friends: that you had just attended a dinner party at which the guest of honor was (a) O.J. Simpson or (b) Mark Fuhrman?

Sean Delonas

In a world in which the answer is always (b), the fear of being tainted by proximity to racism is overwhelming. Vincent Bugliosi views the unwillingness of prosecutors Marcia Clark and Christopher Darden to rehabilitate Fuhrman—in fact, the scarcely controlled fury with which Clark turned on her former star witness ("Do we wish there were no such people on the planet? Yes.")—as evidence of an inversion of values. Sending a murderer to jail is no longer a primary social goal but a secondary one, well behind such abstract staples of the civil rights agenda as "respect" and "tolerance" and "dignity." Once the banner of "racial justice" was raised in the Simpson trial, everything else, including the sanctity of life, became negotiable.

Jeffrey Toobin, who was dealt the original "race card" in the fall of 1994 when the defense team leaked him the story that it would focus on Mark Fuhrman's racism, put it forthrightly right after the verdict: "Fear of being called racist transcended everything in the newsroom," he wrote in the *New Yorker*. "Our caution and fear, however, misled. The case against Simpson was simply overwhelming. When we said otherwise, we lied to the audience that trusted us."

"I think you can say, without exaggeration, that this is our Dreyfus affair," says Geraldo Rivera, meaning that it has zigzagged along a fault line and shown the unbridgeable differences that divide the nation.

It is worth recalling that the "old order" that sent Alfred Dreyfus to Devil's Island was not that old at the time, but a product of the romantic militarism that arose from France's humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War twenty-five years earlier. Like our own civil rights movement, that surge of nationalism was necessary and healthy at first, but at some moment it grew corrupt, turned on the society it had served, and became an active menace to it.

As with the corrupt Dreyfus verdicts, the enduring interest in the O.J. verdict is due to an uncomfortable truth it revealed about our country—how the very definition of justice has changed in the past thirty years. The jury that declared O.J. Simpson not guilty of two murders we all know he committed was acting in accordance with our national ideals, circa 1996. After all, there was nothing unexpected about the verdict; as Diana Trilling writes, "Almost everyone with whom I spoke about the case expected a hung jury; no one anticipated a conviction."

No one anticipated a conviction—not even Nicole Brown Simpson. She told her friends, "O.J.'s going to kill me and he's going to get away with it." She opened a safe-deposit box in which she stored evidence against O.J. for an eventual murder trial. She had little doubt that the crime would occur and little faith that the law would avenge her.

Johnnie Cochran trusted that the jurors would "do the right thing," and they did. The side that used the ethnic slurs lost. The side that argued for "racial justice"—and against justice—won. By the country's current institutional and cultural standards, *it was a just verdict*.

That is the truth that obsesses the country nine months after the trial, and will obsess us for a long time to come. ♦

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Re-Politicizing American Politics

By Harvey Mansfield

How remarkable it is that Americans feel so dependent on government and at the same time so contemptuous of it! This is a political situation that gives hope to both Democrats and Republicans. The hope is conservative in each case. The Democrats stand for conserving the status quo; the Republicans stand for conservative reform. The debate is taking place within the bounds of conservatism, and so it is not surprising that the party of Big Government can survive, and may even triumph, despite the declaration of the White House's current occupant that "the era of big government is over."

Of course, Bill Clinton's words do not mean what they seem; Clinton has not abandoned the cause of Big Government. Quite the opposite. Every move he makes is in defense of Big Government, and every proposal he offers has a little bit of Big Government attached. But all the same, these were not words he was happy to utter. They were words he had to utter, and they indicate his belief, or his perception of the public's belief, that Big Government cannot continue as it has.

But they also show Clinton's confidence that Big Government itself will continue. All he said was that the "era of big government" is over; he did not say Big Government itself had come to an end. The *era* of Big Government was its period of expansion, when Democrats could be the party of progress because progress meant legislating government programs to give people security. Since those programs have failed, people no longer believe they constitute progress, and so it has been hard times, recently, for the party of progress—most spectacularly in the congressional election of 1994.

Since 1995 Clinton has adopted the attitude of go-slow conservatism toward Big Government. He has only the attitude because he does not share in the conservative hostility to Big Government. But the attitude is agreeable to him and seems to be succeeding because a certain conservatism is endemic to Big Government. Big Government supplies "entitlements," which are vested interests people will want to defend. Because entitlements belong to every individual citizen and are thought to be deserved but always endangered, people can become very defensive—and very conservative—on their behalf. This is no accident. Entitlements were set up by the New Deal and the Great Society, as Democrats always say, "so that no one can take them away from you." Perhaps there will always be those who want to take them away: Republicans, from whom the American people will have to be defended by the Democratic party.

Even so, the Democrats have little to console themselves with, however well they may appear to be doing at present. They will not see their accomplishments disappear, but they must listen to them being maligned. And if they want to succeed like Bill Clinton, they have to join the chorus of denunciation. The Democratic party, the party of government, has destroyed the reputation of its favorite instrument. The government is now regarded with anger and dislike when it acts and with contempt when it fails to act. Though the public's ill feeling focuses on the evils of bureaucracy, it extends to the elected parts of government, especially Congress. Congress is despised because it fails to correct our situation with new legislation, as if we were lacking in that remedy. The judiciary, too, has provoked justified resentment by deliberately blurring the distinction between judging and legislating.

That Americans should think so ill of their government is a very bad thing. Their resentment is the major count in the indictment of New Deal and Great Society programs, for they have made Americans doubt the worth of their government. The American republic, the oldest and most powerful in the world, was called by Abraham Lincoln at the time of its greatest crisis "the last best hope of earth." Ours is a certain form of government, with a certain constitution, and it is by far our most valuable common possession. Without it, all our private possessions and lib-

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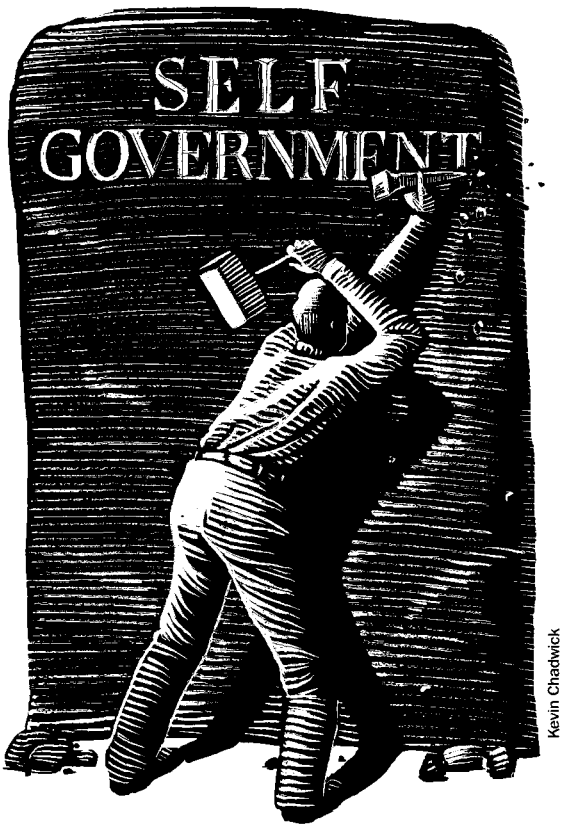
erties would become insecure.

Since the republican form of government is self-government, the government is *ours*—and not merely in the sense that it imposes itself on us. It's true, to speak as candidly as James Madison, that our government controls the people—but only on condition that the people control the government. With Big Government, however, we no longer sense that we are in control; the government controls us, and there's nothing we can do about it.

American conservatives, therefore, are not simply enemies of government, and they should not present themselves as such. The main task of conservatism today, to which all other concerns should be subordinated, is to restore our *self-government*, to revive our sense that it is ours and that, within reason, we can do with it what we want. Doubt about our system of self-government easily becomes doubt about ourselves—for who deserves the blame for Big Government, the politicians or we who elect them? Because Big Government is so pervasive, popular anger turns into frustration; one cannot put politics aside when the government is always there at your side, hovering over your shoulder with warnings and regulations. Our frustration with government's reach is quite justified. And the job of conservatism is to correct the circumstances that account for it.



Kevin Chadwick

The conservative goal is not to minimize the scope of government, as if government were a necessary evil. The stodginess of Big Government, the slobbering effusiveness of its good intentions, seem to justify populist revolts against it. But populist revolts lack direction; they can go left as well as right, attacking corporations as well as punitive taxation. They are also fitful, and have little staying power because they do not present an alternative to the system they revolt against. Although they shun political parties, they end up being used or absorbed by them. Conservatives are entitled to exploit populist resentment against government if they use it to educate the American people in the forms and habits of self-government.

For the hidden truth is that, despite its reputation, Big Government does not breed too much politics; it breeds too little. While it increases the scope of government, Big Government reduces the range of arguable political questions through the establishment of entitlements. By offering everybody in the country benefits in the name of compassion and security, Big Government has succeeded in taking what ought to be a controversial set of political issues off the table—indeed, out of the political sphere entirely. This is a radical *depoliticization* of government, and conservatives should oppose it.

One of the ways they can do this is by accepting the need for partisanship. There will always be a party of the Left in America, because our principle that "all men are created equal" seems to promise more than it can deliver. There will always be moralistic materialists, or materialistic moralists, ready with schemes to deliver on the promise. Thus, conservatives will need a party to oppose and, when possible, defeat them. And that party can be none other than the Republican party.

Conservatives may not be identical to Republicans, but they can hardly be indifferent to the fortunes of the GOP. The Republican party's best representatives opposed Big Government from the first under the New Deal and at its flourishing in the Great Society. They made two arguments that were unsuccessful at the time but have proved to be true.

First, they argued that Big Government costs too much. Its overwhelming cost was not apparent at first, when benefits were low, but it was predictable that benefits would grow beyond people's capacity or willingness to pay for them. And indeed they have. Benefits are too easy to increase, because the increases are too easy to accept.

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An entitlement is a benefit you have regardless of the budget, of available resources, which means regardless of the common good. But a budget is not merely a sum of income and expense; it is also a moral accounting to your fellow citizens. Having an entitlement, however, enables you to forget the common good and encourages you to think: "I have mine, the hell with you!" Your defiance of others allows you to think you are independent, when in fact you depend on the government.

Second, opponents of Big Government argued that because entitlements include everyone, and do so under uniform rules, they turn citizens into dependents. The opportunity to earn your own keep by your own labor is converted into a guarantee that you will receive your keep passively from a centralized power much greater than you. If you have only the opportunity, and no guarantee, then you have to get off your duff, develop dependable habits, show some initiative, and be able to work with others. In sum, you must show some virtue. The virtue shown is responsibility, that specially American and particularly democratic virtue. The case against Big Government is that it taxes your money and still doesn't leave you with your virtue.

Strangely enough, the Republican party is now the party both of money and of virtue. If you are uncommonly interested in money, you are probably a Republican; and if you are concerned for virtue, you are today even likelier to be one. This is true despite the fact that economists and moralists alike tell us that money and virtue are incompatible.

The Democrats, of course, do have their virtue, which is compassion. But their compassion does not discriminate between the worthy and the unworthy; it is a virtue that cares nothing for virtue. The Democrats even take the virtue out of compassion by making it compulsory. And they forget that no one wants to be an object of compassion, and that no citizen can be free while suffering the indignity of being patronized. Big Government crowds out virtue and freedom together.

The problem for Republicans is to find ways to bring together those who are interested in money and those who are interested in virtue without confusing the two. The party can start by making the point that earning money requires virtue as a means—the virtue of diligence—and by creating self-sufficiency it promotes the virtue of responsibility as an end. In this way, the love of money is not ennobled, but it is elevated above mere greed and selfishness. Meanwhile, the desire to acquire money forces us to come to terms with the self-interested character of a free society, and that in turn makes the pursuit of virtue less self-righteous, less hypocritical, more self-aware. And so the partisan combination of money and virtue can be good for the followers of each. Most of us want both, so the combination offers psychic harmony too.

Big Government essentially aims at eliminating risk from our lives. That goal inspires its intrusiveness. Big Government assumes the risks of taking care of you, your family, your friends, your community, your country, your environment. It will save you from every injustice arising from an inequality in which you are on the short end (and in so doing *creates* injustice to those of outstanding merit). But an aversion to risk puts freedom and virtue in jeopardy, for any investment of time or money or effort, no matter how sound, means you have to risk failure. Every politician knows this, because his business is one of the riskiest there is, what with its ups and downs, its sudden turns.

And that is why *politics* is the path of redemption from Big Government. I use the word "redemption" advisedly, because Big Government is a substitute for what men used to hope for from divine providence. Self-government, by contrast, requires and inspires self-governing citizens.

So our whole society should be repoliticized and made capable of politics. This politics should not have the aggressive manners of Big Government. It should expect to be instructed rather than instruct, and it should try to inspire the superior responsibility that lets others exercise responsibility on their own.

And to revive our politics, Republicans should return to being the constitutional party, the party that defends the limited government of the Constitution. Big Government, they should note, is unpopular, but the Constitution is not. The Democrats care little for the Constitution, and their attitude toward it is instrumental. They use it when it enables them to get what they want through judicial activism, without stopping to persuade their fellow citizens or going through the formality of winning an election. When the Constitution gets in the way, they ignore it, override it, or expand it.

It was a Democrat, Woodrow Wilson, who was the first president to criticize the Constitution, and his fellow progressives invented the noxious notion of the "living Constitution"—a phrase that really means the Constitution is dead. Defending the Constitution as the form of our self-government, Republicans can be led by conservatives. For conservatives know that the Constitution is the one thing most worth conserving in our society, the source of a government that can protect, instead of stifle, free citizens, institutions, and associations. ♦

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Will The GOP Be As Corny as Kansas in August?

By Matthew Rees

The brutal clash between moderates and conservatives expected at the Republican national convention in August is already unfolding in Kansas. At stake is the Republican nomination for Bob Dole's Senate seat and a lot more. The outcome of the Kansas primary on August 6 will affect the mood in San Diego and signal the prospects for the Republican Congress in November. The bedrock issue, in the words of social conservative Gary Bauer, is "whether the GOP will be a Reagan-style party or . . . go back to a mushy country-club Republicanism."

Incumbent senator Sheila Frahm, appointed after Dole retired, is the standard-bearer for the moderates. She blasts her challenger for his "slash and burn" approach to budget cutting. Undaunted, Sam Brownback, prototypical House GOP freshman, says those who would "simply skim spending off the top" are pushing the "tough decisions onto future generations."

AS GOES AUGUST'S SENATE PRIMARY IN KANSAS BETWEEN AN OLD-FASHIONED DOLE REPUBLICAN AND A GINGRICH CONSERVATIVE, SO WILL GO THE GOP.

No one will accuse Brownback of being a skimmer. He proposes to eliminate the Departments of Commerce, Education, Energy, and Housing and Urban Development and to "refocus the federal government . . . on its core missions." His folksy, buoyant demeanor and small-town Kansas background make him an attractive leader for the New Federalists, a group of House members he organized to lobby for devolving power to the states. His political roots go back to Reagan, and he yearns for Reagan-style reductions in marginal tax rates. Yet he also reflects the influence of Ross Perot (who took 27 percent of the vote in Kansas in 1992). Brownback is staunchly for term limits and balanced budgets and prods House leaders to move on campaign finance reform.

Frahm is no liberal, but she lacks Brownback's conservative credentials. That's not stopping her from spouting conservative rhetoric. Her campaign literature calls her "A Conservative Voice for Kansas," emphasizing reductions in taxes and spending. Her campaign manager, Bruce Lott, notes that he previously worked for right-wingers like Sen. Trent Lott (no relation) and Mike Huckabee, the new governor of Arkansas, and is himself "very conservative." What about the candidate? "Sheila and I . . . are more of the deliberative, calculating type," admits Kansas governor Bill Graves, "cautious in our approach." On fiscal issues Frahm and Brownback appear to be divided less by ideology than by temperament. Both want balanced budgets and tax cuts. Scratch the surface, though, and you'll find she stresses the former, he the latter.

The real contrast is on social issues: He's pro-life, she's pro-choice. That mattered less as recently as five years ago. Back then, she comfortably fit the profile of a mainstream, right-leaning Republican. But in the intervening period the Kansas GOP establishment (including Dole, even though he maintained his pro-life voting record) has been thrown on the defensive, as socially conservative voters have been energized. These days, to be identified, as Frahm is, as the "Bob Dole Republican" no longer guarantees victory in Kansas.

The battle being waged across the state is a microcosm of the intra-Republican wrangling on the national scene. With Dole and Nancy Kassebaum ensconced in the Senate since 1969 and 1979 respectively, the new conservatism that has prevailed in the GOP nationally never found a voice among Kansas's top elected officials. Thus, it was a Republican-controlled Kansas legislature that in 1986 voted for a new property tax system, raising property taxes for many homeowners and businesses. When the rates went into effect in 1989, 2,000 usually reticent Kansans protested outside the state capitol. The property-tax fiasco yielded a conservative primary challenge to the Republican governor in 1990. The party establishment, including Dole (and George Bush), weighed in heavily for the incumbent, Mike Hayden, and helped him eke out a narrow primary victory. But

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Hayden's luck dried up in the general election, and he lost to Democrat Joan Finney. Democrats, capitalizing on the Republican disarray, also won control of the House, controlling both the governor's office and the House for the first time since 1913.

These two events—the tax debacle and the party establishment's spurning of conservatives in the gubernatorial primary—triggered a backlash against the Republican chieftains. In 1991, the state's largest and previously non-political anti-abortion group, Kansans for Life, began sponsoring political-training seminars throughout the state. Before long, precincts traditionally controlled by Dole-style Republicans were being won by conservatives. More conservatives were running for the legislature, and their supporters were turning out to vote—helping the GOP win back the House in 1992. Two years later so many conservatives were elected that they dislodged the moderate House speaker and replaced him with one of their own. This prompted the state party chairman, a Dole ally named Kim Wells, to step aside in favor of the architect of the conservative takeover, former state legislator David Miller.

ONE OF THE IRONIES IN THE CURRENT RACE IS THAT NEITHER BROWNBACK NOR FRAHM WAS AN AGENT IN THE IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE PARTY.

One of the ironies of the current Senate race is that neither Brownback nor Frahm was an agent of this transformation of their party. Frahm was toiling in the state legislature, practicing a go-along-to-get-along style of governing anathema to the conservatives. And Brownback was serving as state secretary of agriculture, an appointive position reserved for someone obedient to the all-powerful Board of Agriculture. Indeed, as recently as 1994, Brownback was the moderate in the Republican primary for his U.S. House seat, and in the general election he chose not to sign the Contract with America.

Brownback's conversion to Gingrichism left some of his political heirs in Kansas bruised. Rep. Pat Roberts, who is all-but-guaranteed to be the Republican nominee to replace the retiring Kassebaum, has privately criticized Brownback's ambitious streak. A public critic is Dick Bond, an influential state senator who embodies Kansas Republicanism of the old school. He says that Brownback, having run for the House as a traditional Republican, "stepped into a phone booth and changed his [ideological] clothes." Bond's bigger complaint is that "very conservative forces have taken over the Republican party in Kansas and thrown out the moderates."

Yet as Bond himself admits, Brownback will be the beneficiary of the conservative insurgence. "Moderates are lazy," moans Bond. And with the Olympics diverting attention from just about everything, and both candidates stuck in Washington, the Frahm-Brownback race isn't expected to generate much hype or turnout. This spells trouble for the incumbent. Kansans for Life, which maintains a mailing list of about 100,000, will be working for Brownback, spurred by both his pro-life rhetoric and Frahm's support for abortion rights; one of Frahm's first Senate votes was to allow abortions in overseas military hospitals. Brownback, who hammers Frahm as a fiscal liberal, also expects tax and gun groups to mobilize for him (opposition to gun control led to the surprise defeat of Rep. Dan Glickman, a Wichita Democrat, in 1994). His support from leading conservatives should help, too. Endorsements from William Bennett and James Dobson are featured in radio ads, and both Jack Kemp and anti-tax activist Grover Norquist have campaigned with Brownback in Kansas. Steve Forbes, who is holding a fund-raiser for Brownback in New York on July 30, says the candidate "wonderfully symbolizes idea-oriented, pro-growth Republicanism."

Frahm is getting help from Kassebaum and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, both of whom are holding fund-raisers. As of July 1, Frahm enjoyed a slight financial advantage over Brownback, though the decision by the National Republican Senatorial Committee to stay neutral—as an official party organ, it almost always supports the incumbent—was a big boost for Brownback. The more fundamental problem, as Bond suggested, is that Frahm doesn't have the reservoir of support Brownback does. Burdett Loomis, a political science professor at the University of Kansas, points out that half of Johnson County, a moderate stronghold, "will be in Colorado vacationing on Election Day."

A series of televised debates will help focus the race, though few doubt that Brownback will be the beneficiary of these encounters. Pete McGill, a Topeka lobbyist and longtime Kansas political operative, says Brownback is ten times better a campaigner than Frahm. That's surely an exaggeration, but Brownback

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can't be underestimated as a candidate. He was student body president at Kansas State and later honed his public speaking as a law professor and radio broadcaster. In the 1994 general election campaign, his first try at elected office, Brownback defeated a former two-term governor, John Carlin, with 66 percent of the vote. Since his election, he's spent nearly every weekend in his Topeka district, where his wife and three children still live and where he is still listed in the phone book.

Frahm's performance as a campaigner pales in comparison, although she won a statewide election (for lieutenant governor) in 1994. The *Wichita Eagle*, one of the state's biggest newspapers, describes her this way: "Envision your mother or favorite grade-school teacher going to work in Washington, someone who is plump, pleasant, and prodding." On the stump, she's smooth, if a little bit stiff. She has personal stories to tell that ought to come in handy in campaigns; she was raised in a home without running water or electricity, and she adopted an abandoned baby 15 years ago. But like Dole, she fails to evoke her personal experiences in a way that moves voters.

Kent Lemon

Sam Brownback

Frahm's strategy is twofold: First, while blurring the ideological distinctions, she contrasts her record with Brownback's. Campaign manager Lott told me, "The issue is performance versus promises." He points out that while Frahm was lieutenant governor she helped deliver a $1.3 billion tax cut, while Brownback "has a record of promising many things but coming up short in delivery." Second, she's tying herself to the state's most popular elected officials: Dole and Gov. Graves, who selected her to replace Dole. One of her television ads shows her swearing in as senator and proclaims that she's "picking up where Bob Dole left off." The narrator, who calls her a "common-sense conservative" and whose image appears at the end of the ad, is Graves. In another ad, which attacks Brownback for calling her a big spender, Frahm says, "Bob Dole would never start a campaign in Kansas this way." And all three of her ads tout her fiscal conservatism. To bolster the point, she recently broke with Kassebaum and voted against raising the minimum wage.

But the latest signs from the polls are not encouraging for Frahm. An independent Oklahoma polling firm recently found Frahm, who a month ago led by 24 points, trailing by six points. (Brownback's lead is even bigger among Republicans who voted in 1992 and 1994.) One person whose involvement could help her make up the deficit is Dole, but he's staying neutral.

That's probably wise. He'd gain little from having his candidate win, but would suffer a public-relations blow if his choice were defeated on the eve of the convention. While Kansas isn't precisely representative of the nation at large, its moderate-conservative clash is, and Dole and others shouldn't downplay the significance of the outcome. A Frahm victory would embolden those calling for a kinder, gentler conservatism than the brand pushed by House Republicans.

But a Brownback triumph—which is looking increasingly likely—would be a reminder that those who helped thrust the GOP into the majority aren't prepared to give up their revolutionary aspirations just yet. ♦

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Independence Day: The Last War Movie

By John Podhoretz

Independence Day, this year's box-office blockbuster, is not a science-fiction movie, even though aliens figure in the plot. It's not a special-effects extravaganza, even though the startling image of the White House blowing up made *Independence Day* a cultural phenomenon six months before its opening; actually, the movie's special effects are remarkably (and charmingly) cheesy. Nor is it a disaster film, even though we get to see various cities reduced to rubble as thousands of extras scream and flee. No, *Independence Day* is overwhelming present-day audiences because it is, first and last, a *war movie*—a classic Hollywood genre almost completely unknown to moviegoers who came of age in the last 30 years.

In an age of Hollywood pacifism—a psychotic kind of pacficism, to be sure, according to whose dictates an ultra-violent movie like *Terminator 2* features characters who deliver long speeches condemning the military before pumping rounds of bullets into the exploding stomachs of hapless police officers—*Independence Day* seems like something new, and fresh, and vivid. Once you peel away the various plot devices and effects borrowed from science-fiction and disaster movies, what you have is a pretty standard war picture about flyboys of different races, creeds, and social status banding together in a heroic and touching effort to save America from the bad guys. And they save America from the bad guys by killing them with great exuberance.

After alien invaders have killed tens of millions of Americans, the president of the United States (Bill Pullman) comes face to face with a single alien in an airtight glass cell and offers to live in peace; the alien starts to injure him telepathically. The head of the joint chiefs of staff (Robert Loggia) turns to a soldier beside him and says, "Is that glass bulletproof?"

"No, sir," the soldier says, and proceeds to fire through the glass and kill the alien, to the roar of the crowd. Later, the president himself—who looks like Bill Clinton but came to prominence due to his heroics as a pilot during the Gulf War—leads a scruffy battalion into combat after delivering a modern-dress version of Henry V's speech at Agincourt. "Today we fight for our freedom, not from tyranny or fear, but annihilation," he says. "Today we celebrate our independence!"

THE PICTURE IS OVERWHELMING AUDIENCES BECAUSE IT IS A WAR MOVIE—A HOLLYWOOD GENRE ALMOST UNKNOWN TO MOVIEGOERS TODAY.

The wonderfully energetic young actor Will Smith plays an Air Force pilot who brings down an alien plane in a dogfight. The adrenalized Smith ejects from his own plane, lands in the Nevada desert, and proceeds to taunt and dance around the alien craft—"Who's the man!" he demands; and when an alien emerges from the craft, Smith is so hyped-up by his victory that he beats it into unconciousness: "Now that's what I call a close encounter."

That line is one of two Smith delivers that refer to a Steven Spielberg alien movie; earlier, he says he wants to "whip E.T.'s a—." In *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *E.T.*, Spielberg created the modern image of the visitor from outer space—the friendly, lovable, superior being with a big head and big eyes, looking like a newborn baby fully grown. Before this, of course, outer-space creatures were objects of horror and loathing in movies, with rare exceptions (like *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, in which the aliens are anti-nuclear activists who speak softly but carry a big robot). And why not? In a world in which technologically advanced countries like Germany and Japan could launch destructive wars that led to the deaths of millions and forced Americans into battle to save the world from their depredations, there was reason to fear strangers, to keep your distance, not to extend a friendly handshake to anybody who came along.

Spielberg changed all that. In the cosmology according to Spielberg, it was infamy *not* to assume that strange creatures from elsewhere were nice and friendly and meant no harm. Spielberg and his ilk in Hollywood ignorantly considered America an aggressor nation, invading small Southeast Asian countries and using multinational corporations to dominate

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An exuberant flyboy who wants to whup E.T.: Will Smith in Independence Day

parts of the world where we did not use troops to quash the poor and defenseless.

And what were aliens like E.T. but poor and defenseless, alone and frightened on a hostile planet, having to beg for Reese's Pieces to survive? And who were the bad guys in these movies? American soldiers—men in uniforms who either wanted to vivisect E.T., or wanted to keep nice human beings away from nice aliens.

I know it sounds absurd to draw too many conclusions from these movies, but they were wildly successful and remarkably influential in the way that pop culture works its sinewy influence; they were both an expression of and an advancement of a certain chi-chi doctrine. For if we could learn to love even a creature from outer space, surely we could all learn to love each other here on earth—black and white, gay and straight, Americans and Russians, Israelis and Arabs, Hutus and Tutsis, all united in our common humanity. The only thing standing in the way of universal harmony was our fear of the "other" and our love of doing injury to strangers. *Independence Day* also gives us a picture of a planet whose residents rally together, but at least they do so in common defense of a common earth, against an outside invader. They are not banding together to host an interplanetary version of Interlochen Camp.

Next to westerns, war movies are the most durable genre in film history. They extend from 1915's *The Birth of a Nation* to 1926's *What Price Glory?* to 1939's *Only Angels Have Wings* to 1940's *The Fighting 69th* to 1945's *They Were Expendable* to 1949's *The Sands of Iwo Jima* to 1959's *Pork Chop Hill* to 1968's *The Green Berets*, just to pick out a few interesting American pictures. They are about killing the enemy, and how that is difficult, dangerous, tragic, and ennobling. They are full of high good humor, often, and sprightly male camaraderie. But ultimately, they are celebrations of killing in the name of a higher purpose, and that is something it is no longer respectable to believe in—unless, that is, it involves killing an evil South African diplomat who believes in apartheid, as Mel Gibson does in *Lethal Weapon 2*.

Still, we turn out to be hungry for the moral certainty of old-fashioned war movies; that is why Gibson's own *Braveheart* made such a sensation last year and ended up winning the Oscar. But Gibson's fight had to take place in the 13th century, because today we would be required to feel sorry for the people Gibson and his fellow Scottish freedom fighters were killing. Similarly, *Independence Day* does not represent a rebirth of the war movie. Indeed, it may be the *last* war movie. If we are only allowed to

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summon up enthusiasm for a war against a fantasy army—like the one in *Star Wars* twenty years ago, which concludes with an aerial battle against the evil Darth Vader and his death star—there's little chance Hollywood could imagine any circumstance in which a present-day American military force might be worthy of celebration for going into battle against a real army. Indeed, right now at the multiplex, Meg Ryan and Denzel Washington are turning the triumphant Gulf War into a full-blown tragedy in the much-praised *Courage Under Fire*. *Independence Day* may rain gold on Hollywood, but *Courage Under Fire* shows what Hollywood still really believes. ♦

Books

DISCORDANT SQUEEZEBOX

By J. Bottum

An idea-novel is not a novel of ideas; it's not even necessarily a novel. An idea-novel is the novel as conceptual art, the novel in which an idea the author has for structuring a book becomes the only meaning in the book, triumphing over theme, development, and even plot. In recent years, idea-novels have sprouted up like weeds—weeds that readers need to root out of contemporary fiction. And since E. Annie Proulx—winner of the PEN/Faulkner Award for *Postcards* (1992) and both the National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize for *The Shipping News* (1993)—is America's most highly decorated practitioner of the idea-novel, readers need to root her out as well.

It is unfair, of course, to blame Proulx for all the triumph of structure in modern literature. She writes well, in her fashion—if not like an angel, then at least like a magpie: She's never seen a bright, shiny word without swooping down to pick it up. Her novels are full of the curious terms she's collected, especially the hard-burnished technical language people who work with their hands invent: carpenters, gunsmiths, instrument-makers, and boat-builders. No fiction writer since Kipling has been as enchanted with the specialized jargon of artisans and engineers.

And beside her widely admired ability to turn a sentence, there is also the fact that Proulx's devices for structuring her novels are not the worst to which readers have been subjected. Following an Italian-made accordion across 20th-century America, abandoning each of its owners as soon as the accordion moves on, her latest work, *Accordion Crimes* (Scribner, 381 pages, $25), proposes a potentially pregnant symbol for the novel's sour view of history: Squeezing together innumerable ethnic groups until they blow apart, America nonetheless manages like the accordion to make a wheezy, tacky kind of music. If her idea-novels lack the sly humor of Georges Perec (who once wrote an entire book without the letter "e"), she has at least avoided the excesses of someone like Richard Kostelanetz (who produced one work consisting of nothing but numerals, and another of a thousand carefully numbered blank pages).

E. ANNIE PROULX'S BOOKS LACK SOMETHING THAT MAKES FOR A GREAT NOVEL—MAYBE THE VERY THING THAT MAKES FOR A NOVEL IN THE FIRST PLACE.

But it's not enough. Despite her prose style and her sense that structuring devices ought to have some symbolic heft, the fact remains that Proulx's books are lacking something that makes for a great novel—maybe the very thing that makes for a novel in the first place.

Born in 1935, Proulx came late to fiction. After an early marriage and some graduate study in history during the 1960s, she found herself alone with three sons to support and began free-lance writing on architecture, cooking, the country life of her rural Vermont—anything for money. Along the way she wrote some short stories that interested an editor at Scribner, which brought out a collection in 1988, *Heartsongs and Other Stories*.

As Proulx recounts it, her contract for a story collection included a rider for a novel, and so in 1992 she published *Postcards*, hailed by the *New York Times* as close to being the great American novel. Opening at the climax of a sexual killing, the book tells in bits and pieces the story of a New England murderer, Loyal Blood, in his guilt-ridden roamings through the present-day American West. The novel is interesting in its flash pictures of the cow-punching, prospecting, and fur-trapping life still possible for the handful of lost souls who wander the Rockies and the high western plateaus. (As far as I've been able to discover, none of the novel's reviewers remarked its possible reliance on the real-life travels of Claude Dallas, the mountain-man who gunned down a fish and game warden in the early 1980s.)

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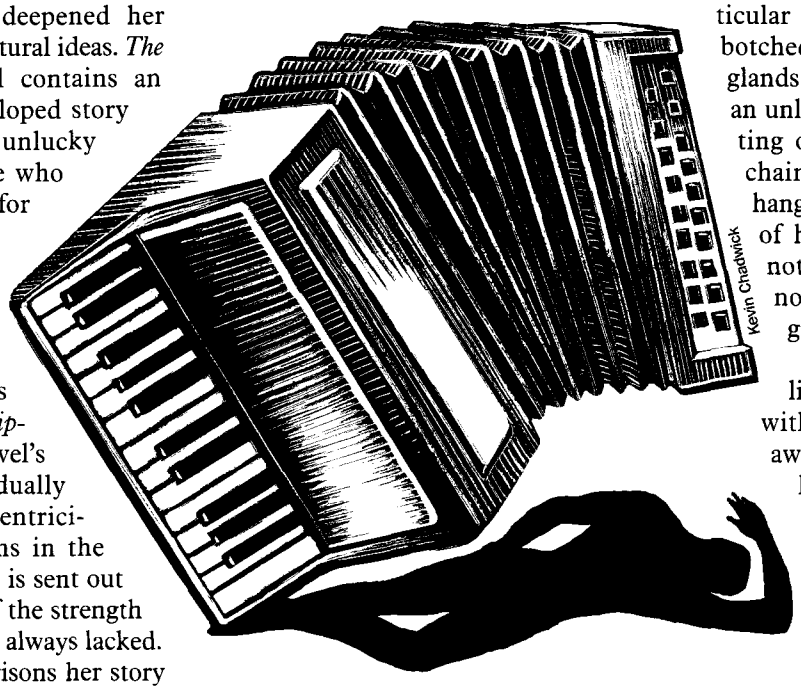
Developing in coherent though fragmentary form its genuine plot and theme, *Postcards* is not exactly an idea-novel. Its critical success, however, taught Proulx a dangerous lesson—for she structured the book with an idea-novel sort of device, each chapter beginning with the reproduction of a postcard from one of the characters to another.

The next year, with her second novel, Proulx deepened her dependence on structural ideas. *The Shipping News* still contains an actual if underdeveloped story about a slack and unlucky man named Quoyle who finds sanctuary for himself and his disturbed daughters with a whimsical aunt in Newfoundland. Reporting for the island's newspaper (the *Shipping News* of the novel's title), Quoyle gradually draws from the eccentricities and sea-rhythms in the lives of the locals he is sent out to interview some of the strength and maturity he had always lacked. But the author imprisons her story in a cage of structural devices. Each of the short chapters begins with a quotation (mostly from a book describing how to tie various knots) which the following pages are supposed to instantiate metaphorically in the lives of the novel's characters. Proulx is smart, with a gift, more typical of a poet than a novelist, for making the ordinary activity of things work as metaphors and figures for human emotion. But too much of her intelligence and gift in *The Shipping News* is spent in crossword-puzzle, brain-teaser sorts of diversions, inventing newspaper stories, quotations, and a whole "knot-philosophy" for life and love.

With *Accordion Crimes*, she succumbs completely to structure, publishing an idea for a novel without much in the way of an accompanying novel. There was in her first two books a deep sentimentality, an emotional and even mawkish vision of human happiness. One of the reasons for Proulx's obscuring of her stories in a cloud of clever inventions may be a desire to hide her sappy side from her readers and even, perhaps, from herself. "If a bird with a broken neck could fly away, what else might be possible?" she concludes *The Shipping News*; "It may happen that a crab is caught with the shadow of a hand on its back, that the wind be imprisoned in a bit of knotted string. And it may be that love sometimes occurs without pain or misery." The last sentence of *Postcards* is a dying man's vision: "Through waves of darkening he sees the wind streaming down the slope of land, rolling down the grass, the red awns combing the sunlight, flashing needle stems, the close-stitched earth, the root, the rock."


Kevin Chadwick

But that fault of sentimentality, if fault it is, is completely gone in *Accordion Crimes*. This is a grim book in which everyone dies, and dies ugly. The Italian immigrant who made the accordion is lynched by a nativist mob in New Orleans, his body hung out for his son to see. The black man who steals the instrument is knifed in his sleep. Characters are variously pistoled, parboiled in hot springs, shot with arrows while urinating behind a tree, poisoned to death with spider venom, and done in by testicular gangrene from a botched implant of goat glands. One man commits an unlikely suicide by cutting off his head with a chainsaw, while another hangs himself in the cab of his truck, leaving a note that reads, "I'm not going to wear glasses." Near the end of the novel a little girl, reaching up with a broom to chase away some birds, has her arms sliced off by a sheet of metal blown off a truck driving by on the highway.

Insofar as *Accordion Crimes* has a theme, it is a fairly silly notion of American history as the murderous enacting of the violence and hatred that the novel claims is the American soul. (Proulx takes as her epigraph an overheated line from Cornel West, in which racial tension is declared the universal condition of the United States: "Without the presence of black people in America, European-Americans would not be 'white'—they would be only Irish, Italians, Poles, Welsh, and others engaged in class, ethnic, and gender struggles over resources and identity.") But the violence in the novel is finally all too much, too random and too unrelated to her exaggerated theme. The accordion

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is more a curse than a symbol, as it moves from nasty vignette to nasty vignette, doomed owner to doomed owner.

It is certainly true (as Henry James once claimed, while protesting weaknesses in Anthony Trollope's novel *The Belton Estate*) that the function of any book is to suggest thought. The function of the particular books we call novels, however, is to suggest a certain kind of a thought about the way human life is shaped into stories. Polished prose is not enough, and neither is an interesting idea for structure. They may not even be necessary: There have been plenty of good novels (like Theodore Dreiser's 1925 *An American Tragedy* or nearly anything by James Fenimore Cooper) filled with rotten prose, just as there have been several great novels (like *Don Quixote* or *Martin Chuzzlewit*) that can barely be said to have a structure at all. But there's never been a genuine novel that didn't at least try to tell a story.

The idea-novelists, however, don't like to deal in messy, complicated things like stories. They want the novel to be a sculpture, a crossword puzzle, or an essay: anything they think they can make hard and clean and conceptual. Perhaps because novels have been for almost two hundred years a principal means by which writers in English have tried to present explanations of human life, the idea-novelists imagine that by mastering their writing with structural ideas, they will also manage to master life. But they succeed only in killing their books. If the novelist E. Annie Proulx, with her fine prose and her smart ideas, wants to start writing novels, she's going to have to surrender to the messiness and complication of human life and begin her books not with an idea for a structure, but with an idea for a story. ♦

Books

Farrakhan's Apologist

By Midge Decter

The phenomenon of black anti-Semitism has for some years now been widely spoken of as "the problem" of black-Jewish relations. That is a rhetorical diversion of the kind most commonly employed by liberals when they are referring to certain kinds of unpleasant behavior on the part of blacks in order to obscure the distinction between sinner and sinned against. And no liberals have been more practiced at the use of this particular diversion than Jewish liberals themselves.

Midge Decter has written three books and hundreds of essays.

Thus it was bound to happen that the first book-length apologia for the supreme black anti-Semite Louis Farrakhan published by a respectable firm would be by a Jew of the leftist persuasion. And it was just as inevitable that such an effort would be touted by its publisher as "independent," "objective," "fair-minded," and—how could we be spared?—"insightful."

Prophet of Rage (BasicBooks, 264 pages, $25) opens with an account of how and why its author, at the time the senior editor of the *Baltimore Jewish Times*, first contacted Farrakhan. The year was 1993, and rumor had it, Arthur J. Magida tells us, that Farrakhan was hoping to mend his fences with the Jewish community. As a Jew, Magida says, he had been "appalled, sickened, frightened" by Farrakhan's hateful rhetoric. But "as a liberal and a believer in what Judaism calls *teshuvah*—defining moments of 'turning' toward grace, forgiveness, and exemplary acts of redemption," he was equally appalled by the downward trajectory of black-Jewish relations—some of it due, in his view, to Jewish feuding with Farrakhan. So Magida sent a fax to Nation of Islam headquarters suggesting that that an interview with Baltimore's Anglo-Jewish paper would enable Farrakhan to send the good new word to tens of thousands of Jews "in one fell swoop."

The interview went swimmingly for four hours. Farrakhan was cordial, as, it seems, was the phalanx of security men who keep him surrounded at all times. Indeed, the only tense moment came when the believer in *teshuvah* asked the head of the Nation of Islam if he would agree to apologize to the Jews for what "were widely perceived" as anti-Semitic remarks; Magida was answered with an angry tirade accusing the Jews of being arrogant and of wishing everyone to bow down before them. Farrakhan demanded to know why he should beg forgiveness from people "who helped to bring my people into slavery."

Evidently Farrakhan was given no further offense by his peacemaking interlocutor, for the interview concluded in good spirit and was followed by more—in the course of which, we may assume, the author's idea of writing a book-length "biography" took form.

There is a perfunctory account of Farrakhan's life—growing up in Massachusetts, doing well enough in school to secure admission to the prestigious Boston Latin School, then becoming a calypso singer before finding his faith—but the

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only serious account here is a description of how Farrakhan managed to take over the Nation of Islam, supposedly the hereditary fiefdom of its founder, Elijah Muhammad.

This is a story of intramural chicanery and violence, and while Magida scants on many of the details, they are easily inferred. But the relation of the false "Islam" of the Black Muslims to the original, or to any other serious theological or intellectual tradition, is a subject Magida neither takes seriously nor holds Farrakhan accountable for.

Prophet of Rage tries to explain why it is that blacks—Farrakhanites and other separatists most ardently among them—have come to evince so violent a hatred of Jews. He describes in meticulous detail the Farrakhanite litany: The success of the movement for desegregation, which Jews had been actively involved in, destroyed the once self-sufficient and thriving segregated black economy, you see. And that hugely benefited the Jews, who had always been far more advantaged than blacks by virtue of being white. Indeed, Jews were the founders of oppressive white civilization, and either themselves possessed or were in the position to manipulate all the power in this society.

Magida does not subscribe to such notions, to be sure, any more than he subscribes to Farrakhan's claim to have been carried by a beam up into an unidentified flying object called the Mother Plane where the voice of the long-dead Elijah Muhammad announced that Reagan and the Joint Chiefs of Staff were planning a vast and bloody war. These ideas are merely offered as *explanation*, to help us to achieve a proper understanding of why this "prophet," much as he really might from time to time wish to conciliate the Jews, just cannot swallow his rage in the end. Thus does Arthur J. Magida fulfill his publisher's claim that he is independent and objective—or, as Peter Jennings so predictably remarks of him in a blurb on the book's dust jacket, "has a very strong commitment to balance and fairness."

Sean Delonas

The book closes with a description of the Farrakhan-inspired Million Man March last October. This event might be considered Farrakhan's greatest show of power, for by calling for black men to converge on Washington and spend a day repenting their sins and failures, he was able to make himself a place among the country's respectable black leadership. No one really knows how many men turned up on the Mall that day—Magida estimates hundreds of thousands—but however many there were, they clearly did achieve a momentary new sense of brotherhood. Having achieved all this, Farrakhan took to the podium and spent two and a half hours revealing, to his impatient audience as well as to the watching world, the full measure of the farrago of crackpottery that serves as his "theological" underpinning—from numerology to some kind of maundering "philosophy" to pure nutcake history.

Why he did this, rather than take advantage of such an unprecedented opportunity to display his considerable talent for stirring oratory, is a question that perhaps only his psychiatrist, if he had one, could answer. It is, however, a question that holds no interest for the ever-insightful Arthur J. Magida, who explains to us that the man who stood before his vast audience on the Mall was not much different at heart from the boy who used to play his violin for hours in the locked bathroom of his mother's house, watching in the mirror his own every gesture, every move-

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ment, every tilt of the head. Only now it is the world that is his mirror.

Farrakhan, he continues, has also become a mirror, "a reflection of the traumas and the hopes that plagued our nation's soul and frayed its fabric. . . ." But to say that is a way of refusing to take him seriously, albeit in a highflown way.

For whatever grip Farrakhan has on the nervous systems of so many blacks in this country, it has nothing to do with mirrored hopes and everything to do with fear and the absence of necessary self-love. Farrakhan is not a cure for anything that may be troubling today's blacks; he is a prime symptom of the disease. The Nation of Islam may be pretending to put a little moral starch into the underclass, but by telling its members and sympathizers the darkest lies both about themselves and about the nature of the world, it keeps them in chains. Thus to give a sympathetic account of Farrakhan and Co., no matter how "objective" one claims to be, is inescapably to buy into the idea of a congenital and irremediable black inequality. For what more can be expected of them, after all?

This is the idea—let us graciously deem it an unconscious one—that lies behind most liberal pieties about the black condition, and behind Arthur J. Magida's willingness to offer us so heartfelt a portrait of a bad man, complete with a catch in the throat and a reminder that Louis Farrakhan was once a little boy in front of a mirror. The believer in *teshuvah* will supply all the "turning" and "forgiveness" he could ever want. And the ugly black anti-Semite will continue, undisturbed, to go his merry way. ♦

Books

Subjected to Dictatorship

By David Aikman

"Liberty, liberty, what crimes have been committed in your name!" went the cry as the tumbrels of the French Revolution lumbered toward the guillotine. In the two centuries since, the bloodthirsty appetite of revolution, no longer calling for liberty, has grown with each new scheme for implementing revolution's demands. In our own century, the ultimate revolutionary scheme of them all—Hitler's Holocaust against the Jews—punctuated the marginally less demonic but longer-lasting terror of Stalinism, in what used to be called "the socialist sixth of the world."

After the Nazis' defeat in 1945 and Stalin's death in 1953, it was possible to begin the agonizing process of assessing what had happened. In the case of the Nazis, the memory of evil was so intense that Elie Wiesel, the Holocaust's greatest memorialist, imposed a full ten years of silence on himself before he could write adequately as a witness. Even then, his *Night*—only 109 pages in its current paperback version—did not appear in English until 1960. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* did not appear until 1973, twenty years after the author's release from the camps. Though the two men were awarded the Nobel prize for different reasons—Solzhenitsyn in 1970 (before *Gulag*) for literature and Wiesel in 1986 for peace—each accomplished the purpose of documenting wickedness while at the same time commemorating its victims. Perhaps there is something intrinsic in human beings that will not rest until the full darkness—of murder in particular—is exposed to public gaze, public reflection, and public lamentation.

With this in mind, it seems extraordinary that China has not yet produced a work of similar universal power that memorializes the victims of its own brutal rush into socialism and the "communism" (in the utopian Marxist sense) lying beyond. Until, perhaps, now. With *Scarlet Memorial: Tales of Cannibalism in Modern China* (Westview Press, 256 pages, $32), Zheng Yi, the acclaimed Chinese journalist and novelist, sets down in black and white confirmed instances of mass murder and cannibalism during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). In so doing, he goes beyond yet another glimpse at the cruelty and fanaticism of that period—perhaps the best such glimpse remains Nien Cheng's *Life and Death in Shanghai*—and asks fundamental questions about Chinese civilization in the context of its experiment with Communist ideology and methods of rule. How could China, one of the most rational and orderly civilizations in history, embrace so willingly the genocidal political lunacy that was the Cultural Revolution, and at so late a date? What is it about Chinese culture that permitted such an embrace? What in Marxism and Mao Zedong Thought was able to precipitate such fury?

These are difficult and painful questions, particularly for a Chinese. Zheng, however, is no ordinary journalist. Author of *Old Well*, the novel that was made into a

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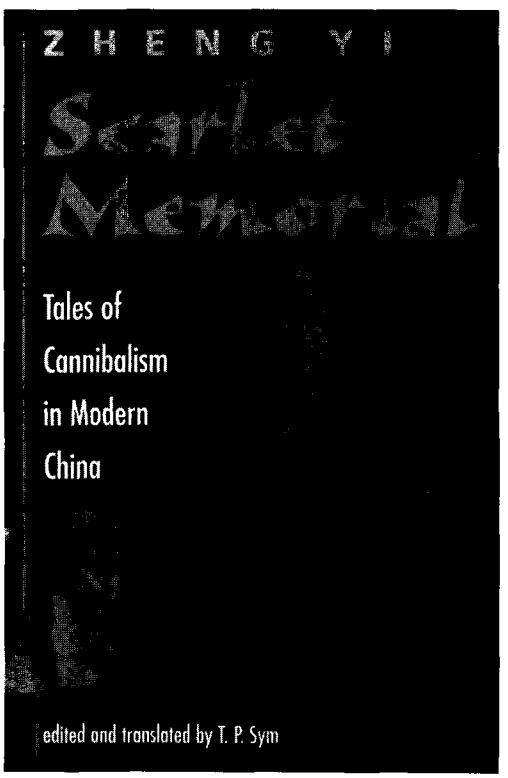
highly praised Chinese movie in the 1980s, he has paralleled the political evolution of his country from Maoism in the 60s to incipient political reform in the 80s to stagnant reaction in the 90s. A zealous Red Guard in the late 60s, Zheng became disillusioned with China's clampdown over the next decade. After Deng Xiaoping came to power, he devoted much of his talents to investigative reporting. When the Democratic Spring flowered briefly in April and May of 1989, he enthusiastically endorsed the demonstrations in Beijing. As a result, he wound up on the government's most-wanted list, finally escaping from the country after three years in hiding. He now resides in the United States.

Scarlet Memorial is the product of Zheng's (some might say providential) encounters with Guangxi province both in 1967, when he was a Red Guard searching for "peace and quiet," and much later, when it was possible to talk with some objectivity about events occurring there. Reports of cannibalism in the province ricocheted around Beijing soon after it happened in 1968. But it was only when Zheng chanced to meet one of China's most famous journalists, the now-exiled Liu Binyan, in 1984 on a train in southern China, that his pursuit of the story began. "Why didn't you investigate it?" Zheng asked. "Too evil!" was Liu's chilling response. "At that moment," Zheng recalls, "I decided to write about it."

The book emerged from both archival research within Guangxi and interviews with survivors, relatives of victims, and even actual perpetrators. Because of bureaucratic suspicion of him, Zheng was able to conduct a thorough investigation only in five counties where murder and cannibalism had occurred on a ghastly scale. In Binyang county alone, a "scarlet frenzy" took place in July and August 1968. Altogether, some 3,681 people were "shot, stabbed, strangled, poked with pitchforks, drowned, pelted with stones"—even buried alive. During the entire 1937-1945 war with Japan in the same area, by comparison, those who died numbered a few hundred. The Maoist euphemism for being beaten to death? "Subjected to dictatorship."



In Wuxuan prefecture, hearts and livers were cut out of living victims, then boiled and consumed by mobs. In Wuxuan city, "whenever victims were forced to parade through the streets, while being subjected to criticism, the old women would turn out holding their vegetable baskets. Immediately after a victim was killed, the crowd would rush forward. Those at the forefront would get good pieces of flesh." One old woman made a habit of gouging out eyes in the belief that eating them would improve her vision. Another young female cadre consumed, whenever possible, male sex organs. In one middle school, students ate their teachers. "In any religious classic," Zheng asks, "has humankind ever witnessed such a frenzied and horrible picture of hell?"

Indeed, an almost supernatural sadism seemed to prevail: When a mother and son—suspected "rightists"—were about to be buried alive, the militiamen forced them to lie in an incestuous embrace. Children somehow seemed always to be the last aware of death's approach: "Seventh uncle, you are kidding, aren't you? Don't hurt me too much," pleaded one, as a militiaman slipped the noose around his neck.

The driving factor in this carnage was Beijing's demand that all of China conduct a witch hunt for "class enemies." The number of dead throughout China during the summer of '68 may have entered the hundreds of thousands, as indicated by the bodies floating down the Pearl River into Hong Kong's territorial waters. But Guangxi's nightmare was intensified by two other factors: the particularly vicious fight among leftist political factions in the region; and the premodern tradition of cannibalism among the Zhuang minority.

Zheng Yi, commendably, is not content to attribute cannibalistic horrors to the customs of an ethnic minority. A former Maoist, he lays the blame squarely on the effect of revolutionism on a population intoxicated by political upheaval and unrestrained by law. "Deceived by so-called 'revolutionary humanism,'" he writes, "while at the same time slaughtering our

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fellow-countrymen, we surrendered our conscience and humanism to the devil. We attempted to bring about a beautiful society at the cost of our humanity. . . . Instead, we consorted with the beasts and stepped into the darkness of hell."

"WE CONSORTED WITH THE BEASTS AND STEPPED INTO THE DARKNESS OF HELL," ZHENG WRITES OF THE CANNIBALISM IN MAO'S CHINA.

That darkness, Zheng writes, was hardly touched by the desultory investigations the Guangxi party conducted, at Beijing's request, in the 1980s. Only thirty-four people received any punishment at all for the deaths in Wuxuan city; the harshest sentence was fourteen years in prison. Says Zheng, "A thorough settling of accounts under Communist Party rule . . . is impossible."

He is of course right. And it is this sustained moral indignation, along with the searing details of wickedness, that gives *Scarlet Memorial* its peculiar power. Zheng shows himself aware of the Nazis' gas chambers, of what Solzhenitsyn achieved in *The Gulag Archipelago*. He intuitively grasps the Judeo-Christian moral vision of a just society—"In the West, law is supposed to restore justice in the name of God"—although he can only fumble with the word "humanism" to denote the Biblical concept of mercy. But in his demand that the whole world know of Guangxi, Zheng confirms the human longing—some think God-given—for truth and justice in a sinful world. "We hope that just as in Auschwitz, Buchenwald, and Nanjing, a memorial—a scarlet memorial—will be erected in Guangxi. . . . And we hope that on the plaza in front of the memorial these words will be etched in stone: NO, NEVER AGAIN!"

"Read *Scarlet Memorial* and weep," Sinologist Ross Terrill writes in his eloquent introduction to the book. Yes, we should weep. But we should also rejoice that China has at last found a voice capable of speaking to the world and to the ages about the crimes against humanity committed by Chinese adherents of the totalitarian lie. Zheng Yi's book deserves to become a classic, for it has honored truth, justice, and mercy over the evil of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. ♦

Books

SERIOUS NONSENSE

By James Nuechterlein

It is difficult to mount a searching critique of liberal culture—as Willard Gaylin and Bruce Jennings set out to do in *The Perversion of Autonomy* (Free Press, 270 pages, $25)—when you are determined to say nothing that any liberal could take as critical. The authors, both associated with the Hastings Center, think there is something seriously wrong with the "culture of autonomy" that dominates American society, but they assure us, and then proceed to demonstrate, that they have absolutely no intention of "waging cultural warfare against ideological enemies." The predictable result of this pointless high-mindedness—a polemic without polemics—is a book that dodges every issue, pulls all punches, and would cause no stir even in Mr. Rogers's neighborhood.

That's a shame, because Gaylin and Jennings have useful, if mostly unoriginal, things to say, and if they could bring themselves to say them without endless hedgings they might do some good in liberal circles. But like other neoliberal communitarians, they are so eager not to offend the Left or to get identified with the Right that their argument loses all of its edge and much of its point.

The thesis of the book (which, for those with limited attention spans, the authors helpfully repeat every few pages) is easily stated. The ideal of personal autonomy, a good thing in itself, has become a danger to American society because, rather than simply one social value among others, it now stands as *the value* to which all competing values—such as community, authority, and mutual concern—must defer. American individualism has run amok, and rights talk has crowded out other forms of moral discourse. We need to reclaim a "moral common sense" that recognizes the necessary limits of personal freedom.

As the authors put it, "Autonomy does not give us the conceptual tools we need to think intelligently and decide appropriately about social policies and practices that have a controlling or coercive effect on individual behavior. We must reach beyond the philosophical and psychological framework of auton-

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omy to understand properly the ethics of social control and the proper uses of coercion in a liberal society."

In doing their rethinking, Gaylin and Jennings say, liberals will have to modify their excessive faith in the sufficiency of reason—and the accompanying assurance that any and all social ills can be cured by programs of "education"—and recognize the role played in human behavior by feelings of guilt, shame, pride, and conscience. The autonomy we want to retain is a "bounded" autonomy in which individuals freely accept limits on personal gratification for the sake of the common good. "Internalizing social norms," the authors conclude, "is the key to liberal social order."

All this makes good sense, and it is refreshing to encounter liberals with sober views of human nature and non-utopian conceptions of the social order. The authors understand—as few on the Left do—that the manifest virtues of political liberalism (classically understood) do not necessarily extend to the social realm.

If only they could say so simply, straightforwardly, and without constant nervousness about losing their liberal credentials. Gaylin and Jennings vitiate much of their argument by evasions and waverings. No criticism of liberals, however tentative, goes without an instant and equal (at least) jibe at conservatives.

Every rebuke to the culture of autonomy is balanced by the reminder that of course autonomy is much to be cherished. For every yes there is a no, for every argument an immediate qualification. As the authors unnecessarily explain, "This book stands amid the present backlash against the culture of autonomy, but uneasily and restlessly."

Most important, the authors pretend that the problems of autonomy are equally distributed across the political spectrum, when they must know very well that insistence on autonomy in the social realm—which is their real target—is a preoccupation not of conservatives but of liberals. The "perversion of autonomy" is not an undifferentiated American problem; it is primarily a problem of the Left. Rather than take the side in America's culture war to which their argument would seem to lead them, the authors steadfastly deny that any such war is going on. Their self-assigned perch on Mt. Olympus allows them a vision so grand as to obscure the gritty reality beneath them.

GAYLIN AND KENNINGS VITIATE MUCH OF THEIR ARGUMENT BY EVASIONS AND WAVERINGS. NO CRITICISM OF LIBERALS GOES WITHOUT AN INSTANT AND EQUAL (AT LEAST) JIBE AT CONSERVATIVES.

As with principles, so with particular cases. Gaylin and Jennings focus their outrage over "autonomy gone bonkers" on easy cases, while carefully avoiding, or dancing gingerly around, the hard ones. They rightly protest a concept of autonomy that allows the mentally ill to refuse medical care even in life-threatening situations or that leaves pregnant drug addicts free to continue in their addiction without regard for the consequences to the health of their developing children.

But on issues controversial in liberal circles, the authors are silent or evasive. On euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, there is one brief, cautious paragraph. Abortion gets a bit more attention, but readers will find it impossible to make out the authors' position. Gaylin and Jennings note only in passing—and with studious neutrality—the irony that many of those indignant over mothers-to-be doing damage to their fetuses through drug use would implacably defend the right of those women to destroy those same fetuses at any stage of pregnancy.

There is, finally, the curious matter of the authors' slighting of religion. They frame their analysis of human behavior in terms of psychology and psychiatry, and their entire discussion of a subject with grave moral import relegates religious concerns to the periphery. This is decidedly eccentric in a society where most people profess faith in God and insist that their moral principles derive from their religious convictions. Indeed, the problem of the perversion of autonomy is one to which the Christian tradition has devoted a great deal of attention, and the authors' argument could have been greatly enriched by consulting that tradition. But of course in the circles in which the authors move—and to which they direct their argument—secularism reigns supreme.

All in all, then, this is a most frustrating and disappointing book. The authors take on as serious a topic as any engaging American society today, and in a self-defeating and spurious pose of neutral objectivity wreck any chance they had of making sense of it.

Had the book's argument been rightly framed, liberals would have been deeply disturbed by it. As it is, they will have no reason to regard it with anything but complacency. ♦

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Jane Austen Admits She Is 'A Lady'

Novelist Under Attack by Scott, Radcliffe, Others

By Howard Kurtz
Washington Post Staff Writer

BATH, England—At a press conference in this resort town yesterday, an embattled Jane Austen admitted that she was, indeed, the anonymous author of such popular works as "Pride and Prejudice," "Mansfield Park," and "Sense and Sensibility," which will be made into an Oscar-nominated movie starring Emma Thompson in 172 years.

"The world of fashion, being unable to still its ever-wandering attentions to the moment's fripperies, tears the veil from a modest visage," Austen said as her sister, publisher, literary agent, and Mike Ovitz stood beside her. "So I will confess that—yes!—I am she who was once, and would ever have been, a scribe in secret, taking time from games of whist and the makings of delightful tableaux to imagine tales of maidenhood and the domestic manners of the English countryside."

Publishing as "A Lady," Austen made a splash with "Northanger Abbey," a parody of the bestselling Gothic novel "The Mysteries of Udolpho" by Ann Radcliffe. Yesterday, Radcliffe denounced Austen for her anonymity. "A whelp may mock, but to do so hidden and thus deny recourse to one whom she has injured? Such is ignominy, now revealed," Radcliffe said. "Truly, therefore, do I believe she has damaged her credibility as a novelist, and should lose her consulting contract with the BBC."

Radcliffe was joined by some of the leading literary lights in the English language, including Walter Scott, the bestselling novelist in the Empire. "When she wrote as 'A Lady,' I have championed her work," Scott said. "But the knowledge that 'A Lady' is Jane Austen infuses the spirit of sorrow in my heaving bosom, and so I ejaculate: She's got some major explaining to do."

Noted London media critic Samuel Taylor Coleridge, speaking from the Betty Ford Clinic, where he has gone to address an opium addiction, said there was only one way for Austen to regain her reputation. "She must abase herself before the world of propriety," he said, "and beg its mercy. True, we are hardly inclined to offer mercy when it is asked, but we do so enjoy watching a good act of abasement."

When asked about reports that she had been disinvited to the Squire's dance here on Saturday, Austen seemed pained. Quickly, she picked up her sewing and said she had more important things to worry about. "Jane Austen will continue to live her quiet country life," Austen said.

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